Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

THE TRUTH ABOUT FINLAND

By Ivor Montagu

JANUARY 1940 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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A DELEGATE CONFERENCE

on

"Labour and the War"

will be held under the auspices of the *Labour Monthly*

on

FEBRUARY 25th, 1940

at the Holborn Hall, London, W.C.2

TWO SESSIONS: 10 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

The Conference will provide a forum for the discussion of the political and economic problems arising from the war and the tasks of the Labour Movement.

Full details of agenda, etc., will be announced in the February issue of the *Labour Monthly*.

All working-class organisations, political parties, co-operative organisations and trade union bodies, and other progressive organisations are invited to send delegates to this Conference. (Delegate fee 1s.; three delegates, 2s. 6d.)

Labour Monthly Conference Groups and Readers' Groups can also be formed and send delegates.

Organisations are urged to appoint their delegates as early as possible, and to hold preliminary discussion on the issues on the basis of the articles appearing in the *Labour Monthly*.

Write for further particulars. In particular, please send in the name and address of the Secretary of the Branch of any organisation to which you may belong so that the *Labour Monthly* can send an official invitation for the branch to be represented at the Conference.

Address all enquiries to:

THE CONFERENCE SECRETARY, "THE LABOUR MONTHLY,"

43 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Outlook for 1940—Friends and Enemies—On Which Side? —This War and the Last—An Imperialist War against a Special Background—Not the Final Confrontation—The Basic Aim—Britain and the Soviet Union—Western Imperialism and Finland—Fury Unloosed—Dilemma of Imperialism—The Labour Party on the Warpath —The Second International—The Final Phase —Prospects and Tasks

WITH 1940 the lines of the world situation begin to take on anew the sharpness of the years which followed the Russian Revolution and the last world war. At the opening of 1939 the review of the outlook for the year in the January issue of this journal declared that " with the New Year we all know that we are entering the most critical year since the war." This expectation was fulfilled in the events of 1939. 1939 saw the smouldering war-crisis burst into the flames of European war, pressing forward towards world war. But no sooner has the European war opened than the deeper issues of the present conflict stand revealed. With 1940 we are entering into the vortex of that world conflict which finds its first immediate expression in the present war, but which is already more and more clearly laying bare its final decisive character as the struggle of the dying capitalist order and of the new socialist order for the future of the world. Within three months of the opening of the war the attention of the world is fixed, not on the Western Front, but on Finland and South Eastern Europe ; and the Finnish conflict has thrown into fierce light all the forces of the world situation. The masks are thrown aside. All the forces of imperialism, whether belligerent or nominally neutral, together with its liberal-labour echoes, including the Second International, on the one side, and of socialism on the other, are revealed in their true alignment.

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IN this situation it is more than ever necessary for all socialists to face realities and steer their course, not by deceptive slogans which are thrown out to cover the aims of bankers, industrialists and landlords with a high-sounding alias, but by a sober, accurate understanding of the actual class forces as they exist in Europe to-day. The fury of the capitalist spokesmen and their "labour" servants who are pouring out their deluge of lies and slanders to stoke up the fires of hatred against the Socialist Soviet Union and against all socialists who remain true to the international socialist fight, is the best testimony that we are on the right path and engaged in a serious conflict of life and death importance for the international working class. The revilements of the enemy should cheer the heart of every revolutionary. In a revolutionary period—and despite the still early stage of development of the mass movement at present in Western Europe, the character of the crisis unloosed by the war is sweeping the world into a revolutionary period—the elementary lines of conflict stand out hard and sharp ; there is no room for waverers and fainthearts. There are only two sides to the class struggle. The false friends slink to their spiritual homes with the class enemy. New mass forces awaken with the conditions of the struggle. The air is clearer. The period of sickly hypocritical patronage of Marxism and Communism is over. The workers may know their friends and their enemies.

IN facing the problems of the present period it is important to bear in mind one or two elementary considerations which are sometimes forgotten in the heat of current controversies. One of these is the unity of the socialist struggle in the modern world situation.

> Formerly, the proletarian revolution in this or that advanced country was regarded as a separate and self-contained unit, facing a separate national front of capital as its opposite pole. To-day this point of view is inadequate. To-day it is necessary to speak of proletarian world revolution ; for the separate national fronts of capital have become links in a single chain called the world front of imperialism, to which should be opposed the united front of the revolutionary movement in all countries. (Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*).

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This is elementary. It applies to the whole period of imperialism. It applies still more strongly since 1917. It applies most strongly of all to-day, when all the complicated issues of the world situation are becoming more and more closely fused into a single stream. Yet this elementary truth is again and again forgotten by many who proclaim themselves in general principle on the side of socialism, as soon as the conflict flares up sharply on some particular local front, as in the case of Finland ; they see an imaginary isolated issue of a supposed classless " small country " (not the foreign-supported bankers' and militarist dictatorship over that small country) against a " Great Power " (not socialism), instead of what is, the confrontation of imperialism and world socialism at a pivotal point. It is painful that it should be necessary to explain such elementary truths to those who call themselves socialists, at a time when all forces need to be concentrated on the practical struggle.

THE peculiar character of the existing world situation lies in the fact that the present imperialist war is taking place against the background of an already advanced stage of the world socialist revolution, which more and more dominates its course and outcome. Hence the situation at its opening is in certain respects more like that at the close of the last war. The war of 1914 did not give rise until its fourth year to the first beginning of the world socialist revolution. The fear of such a possibility existed in the minds of the capitalist statesmen who launched the war from the outset ; but it existed only as an abstract general hypothesis, an uncertain fear of an unknown future, which could not distract them from the main tasks of their war. Only in the fourth year did this fear become an actuality, and so become a major factor which finally drove the original war out of the picture. In the fourth year of the war British and German troops were co-operating in the Baltic against the socialist revolution, at the same time as they were supposed to be at war with one another. Such conceptions, paradoxical at that time, are freely canvassed in public discussion from the outset of the present war. Daladier, fulminating against the

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Soviet Union over Finland, openly addressed his appeal to those "even in the enemy States." The *Evening Standard* hopefully speculated before the Finnish conflict had begun (on November 14):

> If Russia goes to war with Finland, what will happen? Britain will probably be moved to give assistance to that Northern democracy, which after all has a closer kinship to us than Poland ever had.
>
> But Germany may also assist the Finns, because an independent Finland is a strategic necessity to Germany.
>
> So we may find this paradox emerging: Britain and Germany co-operating to hold Finland up, and at the same time fighting to bring one another down.

This naïve speculation of the British reactionaries was premature, and only showed how little they yet understood the depth of the contradictions in which imperialism is to-day involved. But the public proclaiming of such speculations within ten weeks of the outbreak of war is a measure of the chasm which divides us from 1914. The present war has begun, as it were, where the last left off.

THE present war is, in short, an imperialist war of a peculiar type, or rather, set against a peculiar background; and the background is more important than the war. On the surface, the war which Britain and France launched against Germany in 1939 reproduces with almost slavish fidelity many of the leading features of the war of 1914. Once again the wealthy Empires in possession, Britain and France, are locked in armed conflict with the challenging power of German imperialism. Once again the armies face one another on the Western Front. Once again the characteristic weapons of the blockade and of submarine warfare seek to starve out the civilian populations on either side. Once again the old shop-soiled cries of liberty, democracy and the rights of small nations are brought out by the lords of high finance and the slave-owners of the colonial peoples: while the German rulers alternate their demands for the right to expansion with reiterated proposals for peace. So far, the features reproduce themselves with the effect of the unwanted repetition of a play long hissed off the stage.

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BUT every actor in this drama is aware that it is no longer the same play ; the old parts are repeated with a conventional formality which lacks conviction ; it is as if they all feel that the real conflict which will decide the future of the world lies elsewhere. Only when the Soviet Union moves, the old full-blooded cries come alive again ; the real passion is revealed. The imperialist statesmen conduct the war, not as fighters with every ounce of their being in the present conflict, as in the war of 1914, but with an air of pre-occupation, as if their active thoughts were elsewhere. In carefully casual passages of their speeches they reveal that they are thinking, not so much of the war, as of the war after the war. Again and again they stress that the present confrontation is not necessarily the final confrontation. In his speech in the House of Commons on November 28, the Prime Minister declared :

> None of us knows how long this war will last, none of us knows in what directions it will develop, none of us knows when it is ended who will be standing by our side and who will be against us.

In the same strain the Minister of War, in accepting a present of ambulances to the War Office, went out of his way to make the curious declaration :

> Where these ambulances may go, I know not. They may render service in theatres of war of which we know not to-day.

There is a great deal too much of this " know not " in Ministers' speeches for an honest man's liking.

THESE darkly prophetic hints are not accidental. They are a kind of recognised code or open mystery—the real " open conspiracy " of the big financiers which the innocent Wells used to hold out as the panacea for the world. It is the continuation of Munich under the new conditions. For precisely herein lies the difference from 1914. The British Government did not spend their efforts from 1908 to 1914 in building up by every means the strength of German imperialism. On the contrary. They did not spend their efforts to prevent a combination of Britain, France and Russia. On the contrary. Precisely in this reversal lies the change. The conflict between British and German imperialism is not

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less ; it is as great, and even more intense. But this conflict has to-day developed against the background of a greater antagonism which has governed its course. The British rulers had no longer to calculate against a single main enemy, the imperialist enemy, but against two, the imperialist enemy and the class enemy. They hoped, with a far too obvious and simple-hearted machiavellianism, to lead on their two enemies to slay one another. They ignored Stalin's warning that that plan would lead to a fiasco. Only when these hopes were smashed by the Soviet-German Pact, they brought their own Empire into war. By that fact, that they supported Hitler so long as he proclaimed his anti-Soviet aim, and only made war on him when he proclaimed the abandonment of that aim, their own basic aim was laid bare. And even in the present conflict that basic aim continues to shine through.

THE first four months of the war have brought more and more sharply into the open these underlying calculations of the British reactionaries. At first it was an undertone. Because the British Government had refused to sign a Pact with the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union was accused of having let the British Empire down. An official attitude of pained politeness was frigidly maintained. Only the labour and reptile press was encouraged to let out full steam against the Soviet Union. With the Polish issue the second stage was reached. When the Soviet Union advanced to liberate thirteen million workers and peasants, the full propaganda war against the Soviet Union was unloosed. The terrible news from Eastern Poland, the confiscation of the landlords' estates and distribution among the peasants, the ending of pogroms and establishment of equal rights for Jews, the control of industry by elected workers' delegates, and similar atrocities roused the British " labour " and " socialist " press to a frenzy of righteous indignation. It was evident from such signs that Communism was indistinguishable from Nazism. With the Finnish issue the third stage was reached. The propaganda war now passed to action ; the dispatch of war-planes and munitions to the Finnish fascists, amid the applause of the " labour " and " socialist " press (which had been so punc-

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tilious to oppose the granting of arms to Spanish democracy against fascism) for use against the Socialist Soviet Union. This is a tolerably rapid progress for four months.

THE calculations of the Western imperialists in promoting armed conflict of their Finnish tools against the Soviet Union, even before the world situation was ripe for their aim of the world reactionary front against the Soviet Union, were not obscure ; even though it is probable that their immediate plans received a blow from the prompt action of the Soviet Union. At no cost could they allow a peaceful settlement between Finland and the Soviet Union ; since such a settlement would end once and for all their control of Finland as a colony under reactionary White rule to serve as a base for anti-Soviet war, and open the path for the first time since 1918 to the real independence and progressive advance of the Finnish people. Hence the active intervention of the Western reactionaries to deflect the course of the negotiations from the first stage, when a peaceful settlement was in view on the lines of the Soviet proposals, as indicated in the Finnish Premier's statement of October 13 ; the mobilisation of the world press ; the incitement of the Finnish reactionaries to armed action. It is probable that the original intention, also with the provocative military actions on the frontier, was to create a state of tension, hold up the negotiations, mobilise world reaction in support, and launch war not before the spring. The speedy action of the Soviet Union checkmated these plans. Western imperialism, which was not yet ready for direct war before it had brought Hitler-Germany to subordination, was reduced to methods of indirect action to prolong the conflict in Finland. Hence the frenzy and dilemma of Western imperialism, the extreme of war incitement followed by caution in action.

BUT the fury of the Western reactionaries over the Finnish issue unloosed their tongues and brought out the clamorous expression of their hopes and fears. *The Times* diplomatic correspondent spoke of the Soviet "fear" of "an eventual regrouping of the Powers, including a non-

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Nazi Germany, on an anti-Soviet front." Garvin hailed " the moral alignment of nine-tenths of the world. It may be ineffectual now. An overwhelming practical force might emerge from it." Vernon Bartlett recorded that " for the first time the possibility of an anti-Russian campaign is made almost a probability." The *Manchester Guardian* diplomatic correspondent found that the Finnish conflict was creating " a situation which may not be at all unfavourable to the Western Powers. The independence of Finland is acquiring an importance comparable with that of Czechoslovakia, and has a distinct bearing on the further course of the wider European conflict." *The Times* printed a letter from the late Secretary of the League of Nations Aaland Islands Commission, that " impartial " body, calling for " an international crusade against the bloodstained pirates of the twentieth century, German and Russian alike." The *News-Chronicle* boldly summoned Sweden and Norway to come out of their neutrality and go to war : " Self interest should dictate the maximum of intervention by both countries in the Finnish war." The *New York Herald-Tribune* proclaimed that " Communism will not be forgiven while two or three adherents to that subhuman cult gather together under the hammer and sickle anywhere in this world."

WITH most revealing completeness of self-expression the *Sunday Times* made its desperate appeal to German reaction to do its duty :

> The creeping flood of Communist revolution, against which Hitler for so long affected to rally the nations of the world, he is now enabling to submerge one European landmark after another.
>
> How history repeats itself ! In 1917 it was the German General Staff which arranged the return of Lenin to Russia. Few things that they ever did cost them more dearly or have given them more cause for self-reproach. Yet seemingly nothing has been learned from it. The folly that Ludendorff committed then, Hitler, Ribbentrop and Brauchitsch are reproducing now. Can anyone suppose that the results will be different ? Germany is drifting fast to the rapids, where only one thing can save her from going over the Niagara of a Red revolution. That is to reject a Government which has betrayed even its anti-Red

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> supporters and return, while return is possible, to the ranks of the civilised Powers.

In vain is the net spread in the sight of the bird. German imperialism showed no signs of walking into the trap and placing itself at the mercy of its Western rivals. On the contrary, the Nazi press shamelessly calculated on the prospect of Britain finding itself involved in war with the Soviet Union. In the face of this calculation of their rivals the British imperialists began to sound a note of caution. "Of all the dreams," declare the *Times* on December 6, "which the Nazis cherish as possible means of getting them out of the mess into which Hitler and von Ribbentrop have landed them none is sweeter than that of a war between Great Britain and Russia"; and again on December 11, "it would be folly to go to war now with a country which stretches from the Baltic to the Behring Sea." The imperialists have tied themselves well and truly into a knot which they do not find easy to disentangle, even while their more impetuous followers urge them on to leap into the fray and lose no time.

FOREMOST in the ranks of the warmongers and most rabid anti-Soviet fire-eaters are the leaders of the Labour Party and of the Second International. The National Council of Labour loses no time to come out with a blood-curdling manifesto, not against capitalism, not against the Tory War Government (for the class enemy no compliments are too honeyed), but against the only Socialist State where the workers dare to hold power against the world. When Spanish democracy was fighting for its life against fascism, the National Council of Labour had no hesitation in supporting the same "National" Government in the policy of "neutrality" and the arms blockade against Spanish democracy:

> At a conference of the Parliamentary Labour Party, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and the National Executive of the Labour Party, held at Transport House on August 28, it was decided that the Labour Movement would oppose a nation-wide campaign in support of the Spanish Government and support a policy of neutrality in the Spanish Civil War.

Such was the report of the *Daily Herald* in August, 1936. But when Finnish fascism, with the support of the "National"

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Government, goes to war against the Socialist Soviet Union, the National Council of Labour can no longer be neutral ; it not only supports the fascists, but demands " all practicable aid " :

> On the eve of the meeting of the League Council, it therefore calls upon the free nations of the world to concert measures for giving all practicable aid to the Finnish nation.

No mud is too filthy for the *Daily Herald* to fling at the Socialist State. On the other hand, the leaders of fascism become " heroes " in the eyes of the *Daily Herald.* The butcher, Field-Marshal Mannerheim, the slaughterer of tens of thousands of Finnish workers, the man whom the British workers prevented from touching the shores of Britain, becomes described in the *Daily Herald* of December 1 as " the national hero of Finland." No doubt, if Cavaignac were still living, the *Daily Herald* would describe him as " the national hero of France."

THIS policy of the leadership of the Labour Party and of the Second International is of the greatest significance for the future. Here are Labour's War Aims. The policy is not merely the policy of a single group in one country, but of an entire international system and mechanism of imperialism, the system of the Second International. From Greenwood to Blum, and from Sandler to Tanner runs the same policy, the policy of leadership of the anti-Soviet war, of war on Communism and the revolutionary working class. Blum gives his services to the police suppression of Communism in France. Sandler has to be dropped from office because of his too open implication in British anti-Soviet war intrigues, even outrunning the desires of his capitalist masters. Tanner wrecks the negotiations with the Soviet Union in order to join hands with the Governor of the Bank of Finland and the Butcher Mannerheim in the Government of anti-Soviet War. Attlee, Greenwood and Dalton join hands with the British Tories and militarists to raise the cry against the Soviet Union.

THE Second International began its course of betrayal with its unity with imperialism and disruption of the

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working class in the war of 1914. At the close of the war it led the fight for drowning the working-class revolution in blood and restoring capitalism. The Versailles Treaty was signed by its leaders. In the years of stabilisation its policy of coalition with capitalism prepared the way for fascism. Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske prepared the victory of Hitler in Germany, just as MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas prepared the " National " Government in Britain. In the face of the victory of fascism and counter-revolution, the leadership of the Second International prevented and disrupted every attempt at a united working-class front, betrayed and strangled the Spanish Revolution and the struggle of Spanish Democracy, and by the refusal of the People's Front in Britain and consequent maintenance of Chamberlain in power prevented the Peace Front which could have held off this war, and made war inevitable. With the coming of war the complete union with the imperialist warmongers is repeated. The course now reaches its climax, as fascism begins to weaken, to take anew the leadership of counter-revolution in Europe and to prepare to take the Governmental leadership for anti-Soviet war.

THE counter-revolutionary plans of the imperialist reactionaries and their labour allies are not so easy of realisation. We must awaken working class and democratic opinion to their menace ; but we must no less awaken confidence that they can be fought and defeated. The desires and ambitions of these would-be saviours of the old order are obvious ; but between the desire and the realisation there is a path to be trod which is by no means a straight path. The existing imperialist war is deepening with every week of its advance, and is creating new problems as it develops. The interests of the different sections of imperialism are not easily reconciled ; the war, once begun, is more likely to extend in its scope and its scale, until the working class, and not the imperialists, find the solution to end it. The dreams of the British reactionaries, to achieve a rapid and relatively painless walk-over in the war, a moderate and controlled change of régime in Germany, and then a convenient

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switching of the docile peoples to war on the Soviet Union, are likely to prove as naïve and over-simplified as their Munich dreams. Their hasty action may yet provoke war on the Soviet Union before they have dealt with Hitler ; in which case the forces they would unloose would throw their own Empire in the balance. The continuance of the imperialist war means a prolonged and increasingly destructive conflict, in which the downfall of the British Empire may precede, instead of following, the fall of Nazism. All these possibilities exist in the present furnace of events which the war has brought to white heat. For the working class in this country and in all the countries at war the immediate course is plain : to carry forward the struggle against the war, to build up the unity and independence of the working class forces, to maintain unwavering unity with the Socialist Soviet Union, and to strive for the speediest termination of the war in order to hasten the hour of victory over capitalism and socialist liberation. The first four months of the war have seen, after the short-lived initial confusion, the rallying and consolidation of the advanced sections of the working class (as demonstrated also in the Stretford vote of fifteen hundred in the face of the most extreme and concentrated hostile campaign). It is for the coming year to see the extension of this awakening and advance to the main body of the working class and to the widest sections of the people.

R. P. D.

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The Truth about Finland

BY IVOR MONTAGU

> "Finance-Capital, in its striving towards expansion, will "freely" buy and bribe the freest, most democratic and republican government and the elected officials of any country, however "independent," it may be." (Lenin, *Imperialism and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination.* Selected Works. Vol. V., p. 268.)

THE MARCH OF the Finnish people toward real independence and self-determination has been resumed where the joint efforts of British and German imperialism interrupted it twenty-odd years ago.

The recent events which have led to the proclamation of a Finnish People's Government, and to the operations of the Red Army in assisting it, require recapitulation of certain events in the history of the Finnish state, which, independent in name, was in reality independent only of the Finnish people.

The Finnish workers were magnificent revolutionary fighters. Theirs was the first Socialist Party to obtain a majority in a bourgeois parliament. In "Letters from Afar," Lenin wrote of them: "The Finnish workers are better organisers; they will help us in this and in their own way bring nearer the establishment of a socialist republic."

Finland, under the Tsar, was a Grand Duchy with nominally autonomous rights which were suspended and replaced by terror whenever its Diet voted reforms. It fared no better under the Provisional Government of Kerensky formed subsequent to February, 1917. When, in July, the Finnish Diet claimed the right to do without a Russian governor-general, the Kerensky government dissolved it.

The Bolsheviks always stood for the self-determination and right of secession of nations. Lenin, in his speech on the National Question, May 12, 1917, declared: "We stand for giving Finland complete liberty; that will increase their confidence in Russian democracy, and when they are given the right to secede they will not do so." Immediately after the October Revolution, on January 4, 1918, a Soviet decree recognised Finnish independence.

What happened then? The Finns for the first time had an independent and popular rule. As in Russia proper, Soviets had been set up, and through these functioned the deputies of the workers, soldiers and peasants. Presently a people's government was formed, and included in its number as Minister for Education that same Kuusinen who heads the second provisional People's Government of Finland to-day.

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Let the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 13th edition, take up the tale:

"The pro-Russian sympathies of the Social Democrats deepened; on the other hand the propertied classes—primarily the Swedo-Finn and Finno-Finn bourgeoisie—sought to cut adrift . . . . The Finnish Social Democrats pinned their faith on the Muscovite connection to save their country from invasion . . . . White Guards, hurriedly organised by reactionaries, together with doubtful elements of the disbanded gendarmerie, under Baron Mannerheim, a former Russian general of cavalry, proved insufficient to maintain order. Foreign intervention was sought, but while Sweden refused to help, Germany did not hesitate.

"A German composite division, initially some 12,000 strong, under the Prussian General Count von der Goltz, landed in the rear of the Red forces (*at Hango*) and held these . . . . This enabled General Mannerheim to win the battle of Tammerfors, whereupon Goltz freed Helsingfors . . . . Finally, the German victory over the Reds at Lahti-Tavastehus contributed to Mannerheim's decisive victory near Viborg . . . . In a White counter-terror some 15,000 men, women and children were slaughtered and by June 27, 1918, 73,915 Red rebels, including 4,600 women were prisoners of war."

These prisoners appear again, for a brief glimpse, in history. On February 11, 1919, the *Times* reports: "Out of about 80,000 Red prisoners taken at the end of April, or subsequently arrested, more than 30,000 men and women are dead." Colonel Wedgwood, M.P., in a letter to the *News Chronicle* of December 7, 1939, recalls his statement in a speech in the House of Commons on May 29, 1919: "Of these 15,000 to 20,000 were shot out of hand. Red prisoners were commonly decimated, sometimes twice over, and then the survivors were searched for suspects . . . . In that way the following were executed: at Rebemaki, 5,000; at Lahti, 2,000; at Viborg, 4,000, and so on. At Lahti 200 women were taken out early in the second week of May, a fortnight after the end of the fighting, and were mown down in a batch with machine-guns. The remaining 70,000 were confined in prison camps under a régime of almost incredible barbarity . . . . Over one-third died in four months, not merely from starvation, they were even deprived of water . . . . "

Colonel Wedgwood goes on to relate how: "So great was the indignation, even in that hard-faced Parliament, that General Mannerheim was then refused permission to come to England." General Mannerheim has survived 20 years, to add to his decorations from the Tsar and Kaiser a British K.C.B.E., and to appear in the *Daily Herald* as "the Finnish liberator." How long before Franco figures in the pages of that journal as "liberator of Spain?"

Thus was the Finland of to-day established. Was Lenin right, who said that when the Finns were given the right to secede they would not do so? Or was he wrong and are the Labour scribblers of to-day

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right, who, aping Nazi race-theory, prate of an hereditary hatred between Finns and Russians? Or is it, just possibly, that that hereditary hatred stems, as the *Britannica* relates, from the "propertied classes?"

Take up the tale. It now introduces the subject of the Finnish "war" debt to the U.S.A. which has been so much in the papers of late. "Gallant and honest Finland" is being credited the balance of its debt. The fact is overlooked that the Finnish "war" debt, like the Polish, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Rumanian, Hungarian "war debts," was incurred not in the "war to make the world safe for democracy," but *after* that war in the other war, the "war to make the world safe against Socialism," waged by British, French and U.S. imperialism for several years after 1918. In fact, a bounty paid the ruling classes of Finland, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Rumania and Hungary, so much per head, for the slaughter of the revolutionary workers of those countries and for aid against that breeding-ground of Bolshevism, the U.S.S.R. Long before Mussolini, Hitler and Franco, a year even before Horthy in Hungary, the Finnish bourgeoisie was first in the field with Fascism.

For at this stage British, French and U.S. imperialism defeated German imperialism (which had made peace with the U.S S.R., the peace of Brest Litovsk) and took up the running against the land of Soviets. An expeditionary force was sent to Murmansk. But the *Times* wrote April 17, 1919:

"So far as stamping out the Bolshevist is concerned, we might as well send expeditions to Honolulu as to the White Sea. If we look at the map, we shall find that the best approach to Petrograd is from the Baltic, and that the shortest and easiest route is through Finland. .... Finland is the key to Petrograd and Petrograd the key to Moscow."

So the fleet was sent to the gulf of Finland and a blockade established, based on Finnish islands and the ports of other Baltic states. In these, puppet governments were established; raids were made on Kronstadt, Soviet ships sunk and invading Whiteguards assisted in every direction. What was the attitude of Finland in this situation? In 1918, no sooner had the Finnish bourgeoisie wiped out the Soviets than it had celebrated the "liberty" thus secured by disfranchising 46 per cent. of the electorate (*Britannica*) and authorising the "Germanophil Senator" (*Britannica*) Svinhufud to offer the crown to the Kaiser's brother-in-law. But for what happened now that cash was going from the Allies we return to the *Britannica*:

"When at the end of May, 1919, the British under Major General Maynard reached Lake Onega, the Finnish Government offered co-operation in return for the possession of Petrozavodsk (in Soviet Karelia). The offer was declined, a Finnish volunteer force nevertheless assaulted the town independently, but without success. Again, when Marshal Yudenitch was marching on Petrograd, Mannerheim

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sounded the Allies on proposed Finnish intervention. He received no encouragement from Paris or London . . . ."

As a matter of fact, Mannerheim did more than " sound the Allies." He joined in the blockade of Leningrad and led invading Finnish forces into first Olonetsk, then Ingermanlandia. Further, he was receiving cash and arms, though not territorial promises. For what was happening just at this moment was that the British and French were banking on the Russian Whiteguards who, if they won, were resolved to re-seize the Baltic states. Utilising the Finnish bourgeoisie's scare at this, Lenin, who was no more averse than the present Soviet Government from signing treaties with fascists if socialism could gain thereby, in 1920 secured a separate peace with Finland. The Finnish reactionary government, which in 1939 clamours about the sacred integrity of Finnish soil, used the difficulties of the young Soviet Union, however, to force cession of the wholly non-Finnish region of Petsamo, ice-free Arctic port.

Did this peace end the expansionist dreams of Finnish-Swedish bourgeoisie ? Scarcely for a day. With the defeat of the Russian Whiteguards the Allies recognised Finland and, transferring their hopes, British imperialists financed and French officered with army officers, an invasion by Finnish Whiteguards into Soviet Karelia in 1921. The Prime Minister was that same Cajander who, as Premier, this summer rejected the Soviet proposals. His " Government of Officials " (*Britannica*) permitted the establishment on Finnish territory of a Karelian " Provisional Government." Frantic support was sought for it at Geneva by that same Holsti, then Foreign Minister, who is to-day seeking to mobilise the League. The victory of Soviet arms in 1922 ended his hopes as it will end them now.

From then on the history of this " democracy " is a story of waves of struggle by the decimated ranks of workers and small peasants to reassert the independence of the revolutionary people ; and unremitting rule over them maintained by the Finno-Swedish bankers, business men and big agrarians by alternating waves of Fascist terror or " Social Democrat " co-operation (backed by veiled fascist forces in the state apparatus) according to the degree of resistance of the working class. While the history of its " independence " is a subjection to Anglo-U.S. capital and a subservience to British diplomacy (Kallio-Cajander), alternating with flirtations with Nazi expansionist aims (Mannerheim-Svinhufud), whenever the policies of the British and German imperialists ran in harness.

In 1922 the remnants of the defeated White crusaders in Karelia were gathered into a " Protective Guard," soon 100,000 strong, three times as numerous as the regular annual army recruitment and designed for service on the home front. That same year the Cajander government went to the polls and was defeated ; a workers' movement, led by Communists, contesting for the first time, winning a great victory,

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with 27 seats. Kallio, the "farmer" who was nine years co-manager of the Bank of Finland (present President) immediately formed a "compromise" government, the militant workers' organisation was dissolved, its press shut down, its deputies imprisoned, a new election held, and Cajander made Prime Minister again. Next year, under another name, militant workers' representatives won 18 seats and were all immediately arrested.

The Kallio-Cajander section of the bourgeoisie imported a British General Kirke and military delegation in 1924-5 to reorganise the armed forces. Led by Tanner, the tolerated "Social Democrat" movement, that accepted all repressive laws against the working class, was now encouraged, but by 1929 the militant workers' movement had risen again, returning 23 deputies to the Social Democrats 59, building a big press and sports movement, having predominating leadership in the Trade Unions, numbering 150,000.

First the Tanner group tried to operate a split with the help of the International Federation of Trade Unions, starting new anti-Red unions that secured only 15,000 members. As this failed, the big bourgeoisie built up a Fascist storm troop, the Lappo, which, under the slogan "Religion and Homeland," and toleration of the "Protective Guard," organised motor detachments that scoured the country, beat up workers and their union premises, assassinated their leaders (caches of bones were discovered, years later, to the scandal of the liberals), kidnapped the Prime Minister, until finally Parliament expelled the militant deputies, dissolved the unions and seized their funds.

After a polite interval, the Social Democrats "accepted" the task of organising "loyal" unions, which to this day have less than two-thirds the membership of the former independent unions. The big bourgeoisie stopped paying the Lappo, whose thugs drifted away mostly back into the "Protective Guard," which rose to its present figure of 200,000. *The Statist*, September 27, 1930, put the matter in a nutshell in an article on "reductions in labour wages" in Finland: "The fact that employers have been opposed to Communist labour organisations is no indication of their attitude towards labour organisations in general. On the contrary, it can be shown that employers have supported Social Democratic labour organisations in their conflicts with the Communist organisations." *The Statist* is right. It can.

The advent of the Nazis to power restored immediacy to Finnish jackal-imperialist dreams of conquering Soviet Karelia "as far as the Urals," and Estonia "including Leningrad," as the phrases of the Mannerheim group always delicately put it. In 1935 Goering representing Germany, Mannerheim representing Finland, Radziwill representing Poland and Gomboes representing Hungary met at Rominter, East Prussia. *The Times*, October 14, 1935, reported that naval, military and air armament ideas were discussed: "Finland

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(whose strategical position for naval operations is talked of) and even Rumania have been drawn in. Even Japan is suspected of figuring in these dreams of the future." By 1937, Svinhufud was President (yes, he, the same who offered the crown of Finland to a German, had turned up again) and the government of the same bourgeoisie that screamed about the Soviet proposals actually signed (though forbore to ratify, because of popular indignation) the port of Petsamo to a German company as a (submarine ?) fishery concession.

Nineteen thirty-four to six had brought new working class persecutions ; the greatest judicial scandal of modern Europe, the sentencing of Antikainen, Finnish Communist leader, to life imprisonment on purely hearsay evidence for a crime alleged to have been committed fifteen years before, a new wave of arrests of working-class leaders, their beating, sometimes to death, in prison, and savage sentences (the daughter of Kuusinen got 4½ to 7 years) for trying to reconstitute the free unions. An election victory the following year for the tolerated " Social-Democrat " safety-valve led to a new Cajander-Tanner-Kallio government, suffered by the fascist apparatus, which it never purged.

Perhaps, unlike the " foolish and impatient " Communists, who simply got themselves locked up and beaten up, the " patient," " loyal," Social Democrats won great benefits for the Finnish working people ? The *Sunday Times* says : " On the Trade Union and Co-operative side, Finland has been in the forefront of Labour progress." Has it ? The British Board of Trade report August, 1938, does not agree : " It may be said on the whole that trade unionism has not made much headway in Finland. The proportion of organised labour is very much smaller than in the Scandinavian countries and trade union funds are restricted." For male workers : in blast furnaces and metal works 4½d. per hour, in engineering 5½d., in wool and cotton textiles 4½d., in sawmills 3¾d., recounts the report. Wage rates only half what they are in Scandinavia, no collective bargaining in the important industries, poor public health services, no unemployment insurance, no old age or disablement pensions.

No wonder the chairman of Messrs. Hambro's Bank (real dividend 25.2 per cent.), with over 50 per cent. of their accounts in the north including Finland, can report " The trading profit was again good and, if he might say so, especially good in a year full of difficulties " *Stock Exchange Gazette*, May 21, 1938. Who is Hambro's bank ? Well, one director is Major J. J. Astor, who owns the *Times*. A Hambro is a director of the Bank of England. A Hambro is a member of the English Parliament. A particularly impartial Hambro is the neutral Norwegian chairman of the League of Nations Assembly that met to deal with the complaint of the Finnish bourgeoisie about the onward march of Socialism.

Perhaps the " restrained " " non-extremist " Social Democrats

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have secured democracy in Finland ? Hear the *Yorkshire Post*, July 11, 1939: " What makes all Finnish happenings so problematical is the wide discrepancy still existing between popular feeling and the executive powers. The influence the I.K.L. (the Finnish Fascists) and the Unionist Party still wield in all branches of the administration—Civil Service, Army, Navy, Police, and in particular among the so-called " Protective Guards " is quite incommensurate with the strength of those parties in Parliament. Hence the almost permanent latent danger of a coup." Or hear the *Daily Mail* Helsinki correspondent, October 17, 1939 : General Mannerheim, President of the Supreme Defence Council, he declared, was " the uncrowned King of Finland." The Army was " in potential control of the country " and would have none of any pact with the U.S.S.R., whatever the cabinet decided. " The Conservative and Fascist parties remain outside the Government and support the rabidly anti-Russian army."

Perhaps the " patriotic " Social Democrats secured at least independence ? A measure of Finnish independence is revealed in the nickel situation. How many who read the screams that the Red Russians are animated by greed for Finnish nickel have any conception that, as Damon Runyon would say, *no Finnish citizen has any part in Finnish nickel.* Finnish nickel is owned (a grant by the " independent " bourgeois government of Finland) by the International Nickel Company of Canada (British, U.S. and Canadian capital) ; directors include Lord Weir, Lord McGowan, Lord Melchett ; profits average eight and a half million pounds a year for the last three years. And *how* have these profits been maintained ? Largely, by *not* mining Finnish nickel, and thus keeping the world price up. That is how much benefit the Finnish people, or any other for that matter, gets out of the Finnish nickel mines in " independent " Finland.

Another measure of Finnish independence is the dependence of the budget and industry on the favourable British trade balance. Another measure is that the return of the Kallio-Cajander pair meant the return of General Kirke, checking up in summer, 1939, on military preparations in the isthmus of Karelia. It meant the appointment as Naval Adviser of Captain Moore, R.N. (ret.). It meant the visit to London (at last) of Baron Mannerheim, and subsequently the summer, 1939 proposal, in agreement with London *and* Berlin, to fortify the Aaland Islands which Finland had promised the League not to fortify, the building of ten times as many aerodromes in Finland and on the islands in the gulf as were necessary for Finnish aviation, and the inspection of them in July, 1939, by General Halder, Chief of the German General Staff. And in face of all this the holy Lord Halifax (who, on arriving at the railway station at Geneva, went straight across the square to pray in the local church before continuing to the League Council, where he announced Britain's recognition of the Italian Empire of Abyssinia) tells us that Britain could not possibly have

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given Finland advice during the negotiations with the U.S.S.R. because to do so would have been to infringe Finnish integrity, a wicked thing.

So much for the internal background. Now for the external.

The Finnish situation cannot be appreciated without examination of Molotov's famous dictum about Britain and France : " They staked on an anti-Soviet war but lost." When Zhdanov suggested this might be Chamberlain's real purpose during the negotiations, it appeared to some, last summer, to be far-fetched. Would not Britain and France be involved as well as the U.S.S.R. if Poland were attacked and the guarantees came into play ? The course of history since then has revealed the devilish nature of the plan smelt out by Zhdanov. Poland was indefensible except by Soviet arms—the high staffs of Britain, France and Poland knew that (but not the unfortunate Polish people) it is now admitted. Lending tank and air force units the Red Army was to be bound to remain behind its frontier. Germany would have swept across Poland, and the U.S.S.R. been involved in a first-class war with it—including bombing on both sides—while the Red Army had to wait behind its frontier. Britain and France would have been doing ? Precisely what they are doing now. Sitting on the Maginot-Siegfried lines, allowing munitions and supplies of all kinds to reach Germany via Italy, and their Air Forces certainly not more active and tender for bombed Red Russians than they were for bombed Poles (cf. Chamberlain's shameful speech in the Commons : " *If* the enemy started bombing civil populations, we would not consider ourselves bound, etc.," at a time when his Polish allies were being bombed to bits).

A new guilty secret has just come to light. To invest themselves with a white sheet of purity, Chamberlain and Halifax now " reveal " that during the summer negotiations for collective security, the U.S.S.R. asked them to influence Finland to allow them control of her strategic islands, and, hand on heart, " we could not buy British security at the price of such an outrage on the small nation." In other words, the Soviet Union was to go to war with Germany and to be unable to guarantee itself that airfields and submarine bases, as near to Leningrad as are Kent and the Thames estuary to London, used against her once before in intervention, now controlled by Britain and Germany and occupied by rabidly anti-Soviet Whiteguards, could not be so used against her again. The rôle of the " small nation " Portugal in the Spanish conflict was to be repeated. The whole despicable plot could not be clearer.

Further, what position had been reached after three months of " war ? " It is unnecessary to quote the newspaper clippings in thousands that advocate " switching " the war. Mostly direct demands in provincial sheets or oblique references in responsible organs such as the *Times*, they are important not individually but by their multitude, straws together infallible in pointing the preparation of public

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opinion in one particular direction. In the U.S.A. the whole orientation of Allied propaganda—up to and including speeches by Lord Lothian himself—has been directed from the beginning against the U.S.S.R. to an extent nearly undreamed of over here. The line has been (uniformly): "we have to fight against Hitler, not because we want to, but because he has opened the floodgates to Bolshevism"—the appeal, not to progressive America but to Wall Street. There is abundant canvassing of the Pope's "Christian" Front, with Franco and Mussolini and Lord Lloyd, against the same menace. There is the Labour Party leadership, well aware of the moves to strengthen Mussolini and bring him to the Black Sea, and accepting them; itself taking the lead (Sir Walter Citrine's visit to Paris in a destroyer and negotiations with the Scandinavian Socialists—suppression by the British censor of news to America of the British-Finnish Socialist leaders' conversations) in the drive to prevent extension of Soviet security influence in the north; openly associating itself with the plea of discredited German Social Democracy that it was relying on British and French Socialism to influence British and French bayonets to help "retain Germany for Western civilisation" in case, tempted by Stalin, the German people should choose "Oriental despotism" after the war; merely contenting itself with the prudent admonition that we should not attempt to deal with "two enemies at once." There are the ceaseless secret negotiations, uninterrupted by the incident of war, with the German reactionary leaders, the overture to Goering, the intrigue in Holland exposed by the Gestapo move, the Stinnes visit to London. There is the Stock Exchange betting short odds on a speedy end to the war. And, finally and decisively, there are the giant armies, mobilised and equipped, intact upon the Maginot-Siegfried lines and with every appearance of being indefinitely preserved in that usefully intact condition.

What was the Soviet Union's duty in this situation? To endeavour to bring the war to an end. Far from "taking advantage of the situation," it made proposals to this effect, treated with scorn. Similar proposals made by Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Rumania—precisely the neutrals on whose behalf it is alleged to be necessary to continue the war—were equally dismissed, and on the initiative of Britain, the belligerent that is bound by no non-aggression pact towards the Soviet Union.

Accordingly, the U.S.S.R. fell back on the alternative. It made proposals to the Baltic states, involving no limitation of their sovereignty, and which, by ensuring that their territory could not be used for anti-Soviet adventures, safeguarded not only the Soviet peoples, but the peoples of these Baltic States from adventure, and indeed were in the interests of the whole world since they removed from the realm of possibility the mirage which is the main underlying aim of those prosecuting the war.

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Three Baltic states' governments accepted, to the acclamation of their peoples. The rabidly anti-Soviet Premier of the fourth—Cajander—admitted early in October that the proposals made to Finland did not violate its integrity. Then the Transport House friend, Tanner, was injected into the proceedings and their tenor was transformed.

The Soviet Union was under no illusions about the character of the Finnish government and Finnish "independence," any more than in negotiating with Britain during the summer it had been under any illusions about Chamberlain. It was correct and right that it should none the less patiently endeavour to take negotiations up to the last possible test before abandoning hope of settlements that could secure peace. What were its terrible "imperialist" proposals to Finland? They are common ground. Firstly, the U.S.S.R. said: "Come and talk to us." The Finnish Government mobilised and evacuated its cities, then sent delegates. The U.S.S.R. said: "You may be attacked, not for yourself, but as a means of getting at us. Such a pact as we propose was unnecessary when covenants were intact and the European armies unmobilised. We have seen bigger countries than you go down unprotected by covenants and guarantees. We need you intact. Therefore for our common interest let us have a mutual assistance pact and our defence forces secure us both." The Finnish Government refused on the ground that this would violate its "neutrality," and started a world anti-Soviet press campaign. The U.S.S.R. then said: "Very well. Remain neutral. Let us alone defend the points tempting to a third party. Cede us a few miles back from the frontier where Leningrad is within distance of modern gunfire; it is only swamp useless to you for any purpose. Cede us the islands situate across the entry to Leningrad, only 20 square miles in extent and economically valueless to you. Cede us the bit of the peninsula in the north that has fiords suitable for submarine nests that can shut our only ice-free arctic port. Lease—or, if that is unneutral, sell—the piece of the Hango peninsula which was used 20 years ago as a landing base for interventionists and possession of which would guarantee inviolability for the Gulf of Finland. In exchange you can have cash, and territory more than double the size with incomparably better, and better developed, natural resources." The Finnish Government redoubled its anti-Soviet press campaign, the Premier made a speech saying the Tsars had always been nice to Finland and the Bolsheviks a menace, the forces on the frontier were doubled, the gift of territory was denounced as useless because not "strategic," and the negotiators withdrawn.

Let us be clear on this point "strategic." Strategic points can be of value to a country's neutrality, if they are defensive, as the Sudeten mountains for Czechoslovakia. But the points asked for from Finland are totally useless from the point of view of ensuring its independence. With or without them, Finland could not resist the might of the U.S.S.R., if it were directed against Finnish independence, which

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exists thanks to Soviet peace policy and policy toward nationalities and to that alone. They are of value only for *offence* against the U.S.S.R., not of course by Finland, which alone is puny, but by others, and what the Finnish people would have lost by their forfeiture was not independence but solely the means whereby its government could enter the market and huckster away Finnish independence for imperialist bribes.

Backed by their imperialist masters, who were convinced that a winter campaign in Finland was so difficult that not even the Red Army would attempt it, and that therefore the switch-the-war intrigues had a free field until the spring, the Finnish Government now overplayed its hand. It was guilty of a shameless impudence as decisive in revealing its character and intentions as was Chamberlain's dispatch to Moscow of the dug-out Colonel and Admiral Blimps. Requested by the Soviet Union to withdraw troops 25 kilometres following a frontier provocation, they replied proposing that *both* frontier forces should withdraw. This may look grand and amiable from a distance away in respect to two "far countries of which we know nothing," but the map is there, and we can verify with our own eyes that while Molotov's proposal would have meant the Finns receding across a few miles of marsh, not even beyond their main defences, and still hundreds of miles from their vital centres, Erkko's impudent retort would have meant the Red Army being stationed in the actual suburbs of Leningrad !

Naturally the Soviet people was enraged and indignant and, the character of Finnish Government being thus finally tested and assayed, the U.S.S.R. acted swiftly. No peaceful accord was to be expected while men so reckless in their hatred controlled and jeopardised the Finnish people. The U.S.S.R. concluded a treaty of mutual alliance with a revolutionary Finnish people's government and set about helping it to clear those who had seized and controlled Finland, with the help of imperial backers, out from their country.

Scorn has been poured on the People's Government of Kuusinen. Noble liberals have jeered at it as representative only of "a splinter party." It is characteristic of the decadence of liberalism in this epoch to stand silent while Communists and other working-class fighters are decapitated, jailed and forced to hide their identity, and then jeer at the survivors as "splinters." We have only to look at the "legitimate," "democratic" government, headed by Banker Ryti and including Mr. Ramsay MacTanner, we have only to look at the description of it in the *Daily Telegraph* ("a business men's government") to see that the title "People's Government" for the cabinet headed by a minister of the only popular, freely elected government the Finnish people have ever had is no misnomer.

The fiction that the people is behind the Helsinki cabinet, sedulously fostered by the press that takes its cue from Britain's hydra-headed

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Goebbels, the Mystery of Information, has been floated only by suppressing all news of the closing down by that cabinet of every newspaper that urged consideration of the Soviet proposals, by suppressing the news of " unrest " and punitive arrests, and free license for the merciless Mannerheim and his fascist Security Guards. All the evidence is the other way. Why did not the Finnish " democrats " dare to publish the text of the Soviet notes in Finland, while the U.S.S.R. broadcast the full text of every Finnish as well as every Soviet note ? Why, until hostilities broke out, did the Finnish " democrats " refuse to summon and consult Parliament, though the initiative in breaking negotiations came from them ? Perhaps because not all the clubs of Mannerheim have made the Finns hate the Russians. Was there not an interesting little pointer when last July the Aaland islanders rejected their deputy who had voted for the Anglo-German plan of fortification and elected in his place a friend of the Soviet Union by 7,700 votes to 400 ? The people, reduced to misery by the mobilisation, seeing their " Social Democrat " majority accept from Mannerheim a 10-hour day, labour conscription and wholesale eviction by landlords of families unable to pay their rent because of the army service of the breadwinner, and seeing in Kuusinen's cabinet men of common, endless, struggle with them, are not likely to admire Ryti so much, perhaps, as Transport House may pretend to suppose. It is of further significance that, while American big business inflames the anti-Red crusade, the Finnish communities in the U.S.A., from Minneapolis to California, are meeting to greet and pledge support to the new People's Government, and that only wholesale arrest in " democratic " Canada is preventing Finns there from doing the same.

The Soviet action has been greeted by a frenzy of lying that measures the baffled fury of the imperialists who see themselves forestalled. We need not waste time on the terror of the Russians at the fact that the Finns wear white (it is well known that there has been no snow in Russia since those who passed through Scotland in the last war shook it all off their boots in the train) or on the captured Red Army-man who, confronted with a plate of soup, told the correspondent of the English daily newspaper that he had never seen anything like that before in the U.S.S.R.

Frantically the U.S.S.R. is asked to accept the arbitration of the U.S. bourgeoisie, well-known for its impartiality and anti-imperialism with puppet governments corrupted by oil in half-a-dozen American states and shares in Finnish nickel and a stake in the continuance of the war. Hysterically the corpse of the League (prevented from uttering a toot during the aggressions against Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania and Poland) is resurrected to the barely pretended embarrassment of its murderers, and the U.S.S.R. asked to accept the arbitration of a committee of 14 (of whose impartial members only 4 have diplomatic relations with U.S.S.R. !), presided over by impartial Hambro and

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consisting of Great Britain, France, Eire, Egypt, Portugal, Venezuela, Thailand, Bolivia, Uruguay, Sweden, Norway, Canada—all in the pocket of Britain and U.S.A. ; something incredible called Poland and consisting of a General or a Colonel ; and something to make gods laugh or weep that usurps the name of India. With the voice of Argentina (furthest away) Britain urges action, and Norway and Sweden (those nearest) throw the gage back ungratefully to Britain. Britain and France declare their intention to send arms and munitions (such as they never sent to Poland. Why ?) leaving political students vainly studying the map for the route the gifts are supposed to travel.

The Finnish Government, that brutally punished volunteers for the Spanish Republic, pleads for volunteers from all the world, and " democratic " governments that did the same, hasten to recruit them. Franco, democrat accredited by countless bones, acclaims Finland as a model state. Japan and Mussolini blush for the outrage to humanity constituted by aggression, and the liberals and Labour Party leadership, unabashed by their associates, leap to defend " Western civilisation," which is the curious designation they have found as figleaf to conceal " capitalism." When Colonel Wedgwood writes to the *News Chronicle* : " General Mannerheim still rules a decimated Finland, and neither liberalism nor humanity can regret a change which removes him," the *News Chronicle* piously admonishes him : " Two wrongs do not make a right," thus assuming the classic position of the Liberal who, beholding an imperialist who is sitting on a worker, always in the name of peace joins in sitting on the victim too, warning him the while in case he should attempt by violence to arise and throw his burden off : " Two wrongs do not make a right."

Attlee's first public oration, after his illness and three months of war, cries for action, not against fascism or in defence of the mercilessly robbed British people, but in crusade against the U.S.S.R. The National Council of Labour, which did not meet to consider the Fascist uprising in Spain until six weeks after it broke out and then, on August 28, 1936, passed a resolution declaring that the Labour movement would oppose a nation-wide campaign in support of the Spanish Government and that a policy of " neutrality " was the correct one for Labour, rushes on December 7, 1939, to call on " all free nations " to support Butcher Mannerheim and Banker Ryti against the provisional People's Government. Herbert Morrison, in a convenient speech broadcast on the eve of the Stretford bye-election, pontifically declares that the Soviet action would make Lenin " turn in his grave." A dangerous game, Mr. Morrison. Learn that Lenin is not buried. He lives in the Kremlin and in the hearts of millions for whom he is a living doctrine, not a name to be used in vain. Aroused, he arises and deals Mr. Morrison a shattering buffet with words written twenty years ago : " The Finnish bourgeoisie, which has strangled thousands of Finnish workers during the White Terror,

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knows that it will never be forgiven, and that its day will come when it is no longer backed by the German bayonets that enabled to do so . . . . " Words with a prophetic ring.

Not all the fog of anti-Soviet hate will serve to deceive the working class. Facts are facts. They are chiels that winna ding, and they break through every smoke screen. It is notable that it was the experience of the Communist speakers in Stretford that the truth about Finland evoked overwhelming endorsement of the Soviet action from every audience. This is the experience of Communist speakers throughout the country. *Reynolds* reported that its postbag from readers had never been so full on any subject as on the Finnish position, and the bag's proportion was indicated by the fact that ten of the twelve letters published attacked the anti-Soviet attitude of the paper.

Not all the conjurations of those who devoted every effort to prevent the overwhelming moral solidarity with Spanish democracy from being translated into action against its assassins, and who now warn the Soviet Union of the dangers of " relying on strategy " and, " alienating moral sympathy," will deflect the Soviet Union from its purpose, cause it to renounce the just means for its defence taken in sight of the weapons for its slaughter openly being sharpened before our eyes, or alienate the sympathy of the working class.

The Soviet action has come not a day too soon, for any but the imperialists, who are forced to impotent fury for it is too soon for them. Tied by their contradictions they cry : " Wait, wait till we are ready, arbitrate just a little while, till spring please, and we may have composed our differences and be ready for you."

But the Red Army, side by side with the Finnish workers, forges onward through the blizzard. The boundaries of Socialism are being extended. The rôles are the same as twenty years ago. The capitalists scream in panic about " Bolshevism." Their Social Democrat lick-spittles croak at the workers " Imperialism " and hasten to collaborate with the governments of White Terror. The action of the Kremlin is in the interests of the Soviet, the Finnish and, no less, the British people. It would not be the first time that British men and boys had been conscripted into khaki in the name of fighting for democracy, and for liberty in Central Europe, and against the Kaiser (pardon—Hitler), and found themselves transported to battle against the newly-emancipated workers in the Northern snows. The same Cajander and Holsti are there still—and Mannerheim. Churchill, arch-interventionist, is at his post in the war cabinet. Ironside, leader of the expeditionary force to Murmansk, is Chief of the General Staff. But this time they will find the door locked.

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Who Pays for the War?

BY JOHN EATON

THE WAR IS costing £6 million a day. Even before the war broke out actual expenditure on armaments continually rose above the figure originally estimated. The war budget itself estimated for a total government expenditure of almost £2,000 million, the whole of the increase over the latest pre-war budget being for armaments and war expenditure. The annual figure for Government expenditure is now given as £2,400 million, and in all probability soon an even higher figure will be forthcoming. So the cost ever rises.

There are immense figures. The total of Government expenditure at the present rate amounts to about half the national income. Of the government expenditure almost seventy per cent. already is for war purposes and a further ten per cent. for interest on debts incurred in the last war or in the arms race immediately preceding this war.

How is this money being raised ? From the outset it must be made clear that the problem of how the sums that *will* be required are to be raised has not yet been solved. In the early days of a war a government can set under way any amount of new expenditure without having to find immediate means of payment. It places contracts for which immediate payment is not required, and for such immediate payments as do need to be made it can extend its short-term borrowing. The plan as laid down in the war budget of September of this year was to increase taxation by an amount that would yield about £225 million in a full year, making total receipts from taxation rather more than £1,000 million. A further £1,000 million was to be raised by borrowing.

The last nine years have seen a steady weighting of the budget more and more against the working people and lower middle classes. The recent war budget was in this same tradition. Only about six per cent. of extra revenue is to come from surtax and state duty—the taxes which fall specially on the very rich. The money is to be raised from income tax which weighs most heavily on the middle classes and indirect taxes on tobacco, sugar and beer which will be borne almost entirely by the working masses.

The present position is that persons with incomes below £250 a year pay about £450 million in taxes (42 per cent. of the total) ; those with incomes between £250 and £2,000 pay about £250 million (24 per cent. of the total) ; and those with incomes over £2,000 about

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£370 million (34 per cent. of the total). To the rich the fact that they have to pay any taxes at all is certainly irksome, but there are consolations in a war budget for certain sections of the capitalist class. About £250 million will be paid as interest on the National Debt, of which only a minute fraction represents working and middle-class savings. For all practical purposes it may be said that the whole of this sum goes into the pockets of the rich. In addition, huge profits will be made by the direct and indirect contractors for the orders placed by the Government for war purposes. These according to present estimates will total considerably over £1,000 million. As interest on the national debt and rent, interest, dividends and undivided profit arising from war orders, something like £700 million will be passing into the hands of the rich in the course of this year.

Taxation specified in the war budget was intended to be a means of raising about half of the funds required by the Government. Any analysis of who pays the taxes can only tell a part of the story. How will the further £1,400 million be raised (£2,400 million is the total figure now given) which may well shortly be £1,600 million, £1,800 million or more ?

To find a solution to this problem which they are able to force upon the people is precisely the task that confronts the Government. The one thing that is certain is that war expenditure such as this will mean inconceivable burdens and hardships thrown on the people. Already British statesmen are using the slogan " Guns, not butter," which only a few months ago they were reviling. One further thing is certain ; the real burdens of war have only just begun to be felt. The steps that will solve the problem " How is the war to be paid for ? " have yet to be taken. For a short while life goes on somewhat as before the war.

Some idea of what the cost of war means may be drawn from the experiences of Britain in the last war. Expenditure for war purposes was in 1914 over five times as high as in 1913, and in 1917 over six times as high as in 1914. In 1913 £77 million was spent for war purposes, in 1917 £2,436 million. Of course, an expansion on this same scale is not now possible ; the level of armaments is already too high. The figures do, however, indicate that during war desperate measures are taken to increase arms expenditure to the utmost. In the last war between one-quarter and one-third of the Government's war-time expenditure was raised by taxation and all the rest by borrowing. Although the total sums raised by normal means of taxation were increased to four times the pre-war levels, they sufficed to pay in 1918 only one-third of the Government's total expenditure. The effect of borrowing on such a scale is to-day well known. Supplies during war-time were limited, and even though money wages rose, the prices of goods rose even more. The general course of real wages may be seen from the following table :

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	Bowley's Index Figure of the rough average of money wages	Ministry of Labour Gazette Index of the cost of living	Real Wages
1914	.. 100	100	100
1915	.. 105-110	125	85-90
1916	.. 115-120	145	79-83
1917	.. 135-140	180	75-78
1918	.. 175-180	205	86-88

Only in the last year of the war when the total expenditure on armaments decreased and the taxation of profits increased was there any increase in real wages. In 1917 the best paid workers were 14 per cent. below 1914 levels and the worst paid (in cotton textiles) one third below. The ultimate effects of wholesale borrowing will necessarily under present circumstances be similar.

Much can be learnt from the last war about the economics of warfare, but in addition to similarities there are at the present time also differences. These are mostly adverse factors from the point of view of British economy. In the first place, the Treasury is already saddled with a national debt of £8,000 million acquired for the most part in the last war. Interest payment on this still requires over £200 million annually. In 1924 the figure was £360 million. This has been reduced by a conversion scheme and a cessation of payments to the U.S.A. The failure of Britain to pay her debts to the U.S.A., pleasant as it may have seemed at the time when they were stopped, is now a very embarrassing factor. The U.S.A. has already shown that she is not anxious again to incur worthless debts as she did in the last war. She is ready not to say enthusiastic to supply arms to Britain. But by supply she means *sell* and she is not prepared to allow more than a three months' credit. Britain cannot at the moment herself produce all the armaments she requires. To do so would mean employing considerably more engineering workers than are to be found in the country. When the necessary forces are available for increased production in Britain still greater supplies will be required and so on *ad infinitum.*

To find means of payment Britain must either ship gold to America, or sell her overseas investments, or reduce imports into this country. Britain's gold reserves totalled in 1938 some £500 million. Payment in gold provides only a partial solution and one fraught with dangers for British capitalism. The sale of overseas investments is a measure to which British capitalism is likely to have to resort. Already a census of overseas holdings has been taken. However here again Britain's position is far worse than it was before the last war, when her income from overseas was equivalent to about 10 per cent. of the national income against about 5 per cent. at the present time. Admittedly to-day Britain has holdings in foreign countries of which the nominal value totals £3,350 million. The market value of these holdings were however only £620 million in March, 1939. Dominion and

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colonial holdings present a picture of greater prosperity, the market value totalling £1,050 million against a nominal value of £1,176 million.* It will be a solemn day for British Imperialism if she has to dispose of her Empire holdings which have already proved a far more reliable investment than those in foreign countries. The British capitalists will fight against the sale of any considerable portion of these with the utmost stubbornness.

How far is Britain in a position to cut down her imports and increase her exports? Almost half her imports are in normal times foodstuffs. It is undoubtedly this category of imports which it is intended to curtail. Food, which merely stops people from starving and ensures their resistance to disease, is not considered a necessity. Food imports are to give place to war materials. Already there are good grounds for believing that the shortage of butter and bacon is not due to the effects of blockade so much as to a deliberate policy of restriction. In addition to curtailing imports other than war materials, British capitalists will try to increase exports. This is not an easy thing to do in wartime. In the first two months of war, exports were 40 per cent. below the July figure.† Such a state of affairs must cause the greatest alarm to British capitalists. The Duke of Buccleuch in his presidential speech at the meeting of the Royal Bank of Scotland put the task of finding export markets on a par with actual war production.

> There should be plenty of willing overseas buyers, thanks to the curtailment of German competition and the improved purchasing power of those countries which are benefiting from our war expenditure. . . . . A portion of our domestic production (must) be mobilised to . . . . re-establish our overseas trade markets, many of which were lost in the last war through neglect of economic considerations.

In actual fact Britain will have her work cut out not to lose markets to America.

Certainly, when comparison is made between the economic position of Britain and Germany, it is clear that Britain has resources which Germany has not (gold, overseas investment, etc.), but on the other side must be put the fact that German economy was more thoroughly adapted to the purposes of war a considerable time before its outbreak. While admittedly having more extensive resources, Britain is not likely to be able in the early stages of war to be able to adapt these fully to war purposes.

It is also argued that new productive forces can in wartime be brought into activity, the cost of war to some extent being paid for by the output of these new forces. In fact there is little in this argument. The general distortion of industry means that productive capacities in many branches of industry is lying idle. The armed services absorb considerable numbers of the best labour forces. It is doubtful

*Figures drawn from Sir Wm. Clare Lees' address to the Manchester and District Bankers' Institute.

†November figures show an increase to pre-war levels.

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whether the total volume of output in fact increases at all in wartime.

From all this one thing stands out. In order to conduct the war to its own advantage the British capitalist class must make unheard of inroads on the standards of living of the people. British capitalism finds itself in a considerably worse position than in 1914 and the scale of armament expenditure will need to be very much greater. For all this the people of Britain are to be made to pay by smashing down their standards of living. A veritable chorus of financial experts and leading British capitalists have been repeating that the people must pay for the war.

> The Government must reduce civil consumption by an amount equal to its own additional expenditure (*Financial News*, November 7, 1939).
>
> The financial problem of war is to secure for the Government a proportion of the national income far higher than it takes in peace time—and accordingly leave to the public for their own spending a considerably smaller proportion than they are accustomed to (*Economist*, November 18, 1939).
>
> The supply of goods and services available to individuals have to be curtailed (Duke of Buccleuch, November 29, 1939.)

Many more instances could be quoted. Finally Sir John Simon made his speech in the House of Commons on November 29 demanding from the people sacrifices on a heavy scale.

The methods that are likely to be used to smash down the standards of the British people have already to some extent been indicated in the financial press and elsewhere. The most important of them are as follows:

(1) Price rises without corresponding increases in wages. Under wartime conditions this is the certain effect of Government borrowing on a very extensive scale. Even with, and often through, the various systems of control prices have risen in a manner similar to the early days of the last war. According to the official Ministry of Labour index food prices rose 12 per cent. and all goods 9 per cent. in the first two months of war. Various independent estimates suggest that the rise has been considerably greater. In the same period about three million workers received wage increases, which only in the case of less than one quarter of the textile workers were equivalent to the increase in prices. Many of these wage increases were in fact pre-war claims granted after the outbreak of war. These facts already indicate that standards of living have to some extent been reduced even before the full weight of Government expenditure has made itself felt. In the case of certain commodities limitation and adulteration of supplies, without necessarily great price rises, may occur.

(2) Special forms of taxation on the working-class and lower-middle classes.

> Employers must be prevented from obtaining the means to offer extravagant wage inducements and workers must also be cut off from the possibility of obtaining wage increases which would enable them

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to bid up prices. This can be done first by comprehensive and stringent taxation accompanied by safeguards against the passing-on of such taxation from worker to employer, from one employer to another or to Government Departments (*Economist*, November 4, 1939).

What is needed is a tax (or taxes) which would control the great mass of popular spending. For this purpose the most appropriate instrument is a tax on wages, payable by the employer, and graduated steeply beyond a moderate exemption limit . . . . It might be supplemented by a tax on retail sales—possibly with exemptions for essential articles of working-class consumption. (*Financial Times*, November 7, 1939).

(3) Forced loans to be deducted from wages are advocated by Mr. Keynes. Theoretically these would be repayable after the war. Any reasonable analysis of the cost of war must, however, raise doubts as to how much such loan certificates are likely to be worth in the period of financial stress that must follow. A campaign for voluntary loans has already begun. To this end the *Financial News* advocates "the most aggressive propaganda." In addition, semi-compulsory methods may be resorted to by employers. There are already cases of employers making arrangement for subscriptions to Government loans to be taken out of wages.

(4) Curtailment of Social Services. The burdens of A.R.P. expenditure that have fallen on local authorities and the effect of rising prices without any corresponding increase in financial resources means less money for social services. Moreover, the war has thrown the social services into complete chaos. To make doubly sure that money is not spent on social services, the Treasury has sent out a circular, stating that even in cases where departmental permission has already been granted renewed permission must be sought, which will only be granted in cases of absolute necessity.

The onus will be on the authority applying to show that expenditure cannot be avoided or postponed (*Times*, November 27, 1939).

(5) Restriction and rationing. Underlying all the various methods of reducing the purchasing power of the people will be attempts to regulate production of the things that people consume and instead to increase production of war goods and goods for export. The systems of control and rationing will to a certain degree provide the means of achieving this end. The ends aimed at have been clearly stated by a number of representatives of capitalism.

A portion of our domestic production (must) be mobilised to . . . . re-establish our overseas trade (Duke of Buccleuch).

At the present time there is not the slightest chance that unemployed resources will be absorbed into consumption goods industries. They will be required directly or indirectly for defence works (whether in the forces, on arms production, or on civil defence) (*Statist*, November 18, 1939).

Already there are signs of deliberate restriction of consumption goods, even at a time when the disorganisation resulting from the war is creating more unemployed than are being absorbed for armaments

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and military purposes. The *Co-operative News* (November 11, 1939) writes :

> While butter and bacon are to be rationed the Government itself is contributing to the shortage of these essential foods. It is doing so by regulations which restrict production of alternative supplies of English products.

The resultant unemployment is actually welcomed by the Government. " When we are considering," said Mr. Ernest Brown in his broadcast on December 4, " the questions of man power in relation to our war effort, it is of value to know that we have, as it were, a reserve of people."

It is not possible to measure the horrors and hardships of war. Is it possible to give even some idea of what this slashing of existing standards will mean ? Perhaps it is. In the war budget of September the figure for additional expenditure on armaments was given as £500 million. Subsequent statements have raised the figure by a further £400 million. Taking, however, only the first figure and assuming that it is taken out of wages, what kind of slice will it take out of the whole ? The answer is one-quarter. Total wages in Britain are round about £2,000 millions at the present time. The figure of one quarter, exceedingly vague though it is, gives some idea of the order of magnitude of the first burdens of war. As the war continues undoubtedly the hardships that it means will increase.

Will the people of Britain submit to their standards of life being reduced far below anything they have known in the last half-century ? Of course they will not, and of this the rulers of Britain are well aware. It is for this reason that the Emergency Powers Act was passed. It is for this reason that many of the regulations passed under the Emergency Powers Act give wholesale powers to break working-class resistance. For example, Sec. 2B under Amendments to the Defence Regulations (Statutory Rules and Orders, No. 978) reads as follows :

> It is an offence punishable with 14 years' penal servitude and with £500 fine to do any act with the intention of impairing the efficiency or impeding the working or movement of any vessel, aircraft, vehicle, machinery, etc., used or intended to be used in H.M. Service or in performance of essential services.

There is in this case no provision, as there is in a number of other regulations, ruling out action in the course of a strike.

It is certain that the rulers of Britain will hasten towards fascist-like measures as fast as they are permitted to. They understand that without this it will not be possible to demand of the people, for the purpose of conducting a war, the reactionary and imperialist character of which they are coming increasingly to understand, sacrifices of an undreamed of magnitude.

To assist them in their work the capitalists need also the help of the leaders of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party. This these people are only too ready to give. The Labour Party declares a political

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truce and ceases to contest elections. Attempts are made by the leaders of the unions themselves to destroy the democratic character of these bodies. Fifteen trade union leaders sit with fifteen representatives of the employers on the Council of Industry. Sir John Simon makes to this body a speech on the lines of his address on November 29 in the House of Commons. It is obvious that the presence of Trade Union leaders in such a body can serve only one purpose, that is to break the resistance of the working people to the cuts in their standards that the Government intends to introduce. The industrial truce is the counterpart of the political truce.

The " necessary measures " that the war involves are to certain sections of the British capitalists by no means unpleasant. War-time controls place the most powerful monopoly capitalists in a position to increase, with State aid, their domination of industry. The controllers for various industries will be able to allocate and regulate production and obtain full information about the affairs of their rivals. Investment is to be controlled through the agency of a Capital Issues Committee consisting of seven members, which includes the chairman and vice-chairman of Vickers. This is some indication that the centre of gravity of British industry is becoming ever more the iron and steel and armaments combines. These and other developments indicate that monopoly control is very rapidly being centralised in a few hands quite on the model of Nazi Germany.

In the same way the British monopoly capitalists lick their lips at the destruction of working-class standards. No doubt many of them dream that even after the war they may be able to keep factory legislation in abeyance, social services curtailed, and wages heavily reduced, and so be able not only to compete against cheap Nazi labour with equally cheap British labour, but also be able to dump British goods in markets that have fallen into American hands.

As yet no serious measures have been taken to tax the rich. Increases in surtax and estate duties are negligible. The considerable increases in income tax weigh most heavily on the more well-to-do middle and professional classes. These increases do, of course, to some extent affect also the very rich. However, in a large number of cases war-time profits are rising faster than taxation. As has been pointed out the effects of normal methods of taxation are to a great extent circular—the Treasury takes from the rich with one hand in the form of taxation and gives back with the other in the form of arms profit, loan interest and so forth. The special war-time tax—the Excess Profits Tax—is again nothing formidable. The basis years for estimating the excess of profits liable to a 60 per cent. tax are 1936 to 1938, with special exemptions permitting a 6 per cent. dividend for new companies or companies which in those years experienced economic depression. Profits in 1936 to 1938 were higher than at any time since the war. This is shown by Lord Stamp's indices of aggregate profits :

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	(1924=100)					
	1929	1932	1936	1937	1938	*Average* 1936-8
General Index ..	106.8	74.3	114.7	127.1	116	119.3
Index of Profits on Ord. Share Capital	114.3	71.4	136	155.5	136.4	142.6

It is obvious in view of the special exemptions and the high level of profits in 1936-8 that the Excess Profits Tax is in no sense a drastic measure of taxation. There are many other instances that go to show that no serious efforts are being made to get the money required for war from the rich. The *Economist* (November 18) reports that Rhodesian copper producers are selling copper to the Ministry of Supply at a price of somewhere in the neighbourhood of £50 a ton, a figure which will allow a " trading margin " of about £25 per ton. Rhokana, one of the leading Rhodesian copper producing concerns, of which Sir Auckland Geddes is chairman, made in 1937-38 a profit of over £2 million and paid 62½ per cent. Dividend for last year has been announced as 50 per cent. There is no attempt to curb profits of this kind. The railways have been taken over and there is talk of compensating shareholders on a very generous basis. Most Government contracts are now being given out on the " cost plus " basis, i.e., costs incurred plus 10 per cent. for profits. Such a method of payment is an incitement to profiteering. These examples are sufficient to show that the rich are not at present being squeezed at all.

Meanwhile there is a chorus of agreement from capitalist economists to the effect that taxation of the rich cannot be increased.

> For the higher incomes the practicable limit of direct taxation is already reached (Keynes in *The Times*, November 15, 1939).
>
> Income tax and surtax are not only already high, but have only a limited application. Even if income tax and E.P.T. rose further they could not provide any large proportion of war expenditure (*Financial News*, November 7, 1939).

These economists assert that it is impossible " to soak the rich," that if we are to look for ways and means of paying for this war, we need to look elsewhere than to the rich. They imply that the mere tightening up and steepening of present methods of taxation and the prevention of uncontrolled profiteering will not solve the problem of how to pay for the war. *In this they are undoubtedly right.* In fact, it is highly probable that the present methods of taxing the rich will be very much tightened up. (And when this is done, it will be given extensive publicity and used as an excuse for far more severe attacks on the conditions of the people. Some slack to pull in here is useful.)

However, it remains true that all this will produce for the Government perhaps a hundred or two million pounds and leave the main problem of paying for the war unsolved. Is it true then as the capitalist economists assert that the rich cannot be made to pay for the war ? A few figures show in a moment that this is not the case. Almost 40 per cent. of the national income goes as unearned income to the

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capitalist class in the form of rent, profits, interest and income from overseas. The total for this year will probably be somewhere in the region of £2,000 million. The total property owned by 250,000 people each having more than £10,000 is over £9,000 million. A 10 per cent. levy on this would yield £900 million. Some 90,000 people, all owning over £25,000 worth of property, have stocks and shares of a total value of £4,000 million. A levy on this could produce huge sums.

Such are the figures. However, to present only the figures is to present the matter in an abstract way. That the rich have the money to pay for the war, there is no question. The question is how can this money be got from them ?

Capital levy, appropriation of overseas holdings without compensation, all such measures necessary to make the rich really pay, would arouse the most violent capitalist opposition. To cut down the profit and unearned income sector of the national income would mean taking over the armament and other key industries *without compensation* and running them on a non-profit making basis. Will Mr. Chamberlain's friends and relations in the armament and war and steel industry tolerate such a thing for a moment ? Would Mr. Chamberlain himself whose family has made its money in these fields of business ? Would any of the monopoly capitalists and their representatives in high offices of state ? Of course not. Rather than contemplate such steps they would do all in their power to stop the war.

It will not be possible to make the rich pay for the war without undermining the private property basis of capitalist society—the very basis of their profits, class privileges and domination. This fact, however, will not deter the working people of Britain from struggling with all their forces to make the rich pay. This very struggle will reveal that profits and exploitation is the source from which springs the whole of ruling-class politics. In the course of the struggle to make the rich pay, it will become clear to the people of Britain that the war for which they are being asked to pay is a war for profits and exploitation. The struggle to protect the standards of the people of Britain must necessarily expose the rulers of Britain and turn into a struggle against all that they stand for.

Speaking before the outbreak of war between Britain and Germany, Stalin said :

> What does placing the economy of a country on a war footing mean ? It means giving industry a one-sided war direction ; developing to the utmost the production of goods necessary for war and not for consumption by the population ; restricting to the utmost the production and especially the sale of articles of general consumption—and consequently, reducing consumption by the population and confronting the country with an economic crisis. (Stalin's Speech at the 18th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B)).

This analysis, which was applied to Italy and Germany, is now to a large extent applicable to British economy. In fact after the outbreak

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of war the drive to curtail consumption is very intense indeed. This is the prospect that faces the people of Britain. With the working out of these laws of economic development, there must come within Britain conflicts in which the whole capitalist order of things is challenged. It is the task of the working class of Britain to see that in the times of economic crisis that lie ahead the power of the monopoly capitalists is finally overthrown.

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Who Finances the "Labour Monthly"?

> Not one single word is said in defence of the Bolsheviks outside their own country, except the toadyings of their kept press in England and America. (*Economist*, Dec. 9, 1939.)

We are getting rather tired of this particular calumny which now appears daily in the press of the ruling class of this country and is solemnly repeated by their Labour Party gramophones.

Why cannot these gentlemen honestly face the fact that, however much they dislike Bolshevik views, there exists a serious body of opinion in this country which, on the basis of a perfectly conscious, considered and intelligent standpoint, supports the principles and practices of Marxism-Leninism, and is prepared, in a far more public-spirited fashion than any other section, to make considerable sacrifices to support these principles, and make possible the appearance of an independent press in their support.

The LABOUR MONTHLY *is maintained entirely by its* 10,000 *readers, who each month pay the rather high price of* 6d. *for it.*

Unlike journals dependent on the advertisements of millionaire combines and other questionable sources, this sales income pays for something like seven-eighths of the entire costs of production, printing and paper, distribution and office charges. The remaining deficit, amounting at present to £19 *a month, is met by donations and guarantees in small sums from socialists and working-class groups in this country, together with a few similar supporters in the U.S.A. and the British Dominions. This is all publicly acknowledged.*

The books of the LABOUR MONTHLY *are open to inspection to any independent firm of Auditors to prove the correctness of this fact. We will be pleased to challenge the "Economist," "Daily Herald" or any other journal to arrange for such an investigation providing they will agree beforehand to pay the sum of* £100 *to the* LABOUR MONTHLY *Fund as soon as it is proven that the facts are as stated above and that they must withdraw their charge.*

And now a serious word to our readers. We really are rather alarmed about the state of our Development and Guarantee Fund. £19 *a month is not a large sum to raise. It is kept so low by severe economy. We should be very glad to have more in order to be able to carry out further plans for development and expansion. But in the last few months, at the same time as we have received more enthusiastic letters from readers over our issues since the war than ever before, our Fund receipts have been dropping. We are sure that this is not due to indifference on the part of our readers, but simply that they have been preoccupied with other needs. Any deficit, however, means that the debt begins to rise again and we have no margin to meet any such situation. We therefore ask readers to rally quickly and to express their appreciation not only with letters which we are very pleased to receive, but also with cash.*

The best answer to the lies of the real "kept press," the press of the millionaires, is for every reader who shares our indignation to send at once a donation to the LABOUR MONTHLY *Fund.*

EDITORIAL BOARD.

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The Meaning of Federal Union

BY RICHARD GOODMAN

EARLY IN THE course of the first imperialist world war, Lenin analysed and exposed the reactionary content of the slogan of a " United States of Europe." Writing in the *Sozial Demokrat* (September 5, 1918), he pointed out:

> From the point of view of the economic conditions of imperialism, i.e., capital export and the division of the world between the " progressive " and " civilised " colonial Powers, the United States of Europe under capitalism is either impossible or reactionary.

To-day, in the early stages of the second imperialist war, this old slogan of reaction is again being dragged from the dusty files of the capitalist politicians. Brought up-to-date, suitably renovated, it appears now as " Federal Union."

Although there are different varieties of federal unionism the objects of the widespread propaganda drive are obvious: firstly, to sidetrack progressive opinion into support of the present imperialist war, and secondly, to prepare the way for the imperialist " peace " which Anglo-French monopoly capitalism, backed by American reaction, is out to impose.

For it would be a gross error to imagine that the apparently " spontaneous " flood of propaganda for a " federal solution " is accidental. Anglo-French monopoly capitalism is waging this war with the clear aim of re-establishing that domination in Europe which it believed it had achieved at Versailles but, because of the fundamental nature of capitalism and the law of unequal capitalist development, failed to do. Because of that failure and because of the immeasurably stronger position held to-day by the forces of the revolutionary working class as compared with its position in 1914, the *form* which this monopoly must take has had to be modified. The conception of a League of Nations, a league of ostensibly " sovereign " states—under Anglo-French or Anglo-French-American hegemony—is rejected, as the advocates of federation go out of their way to attack the conception of a " league " as " undemocratic " and to stress the " democracy " of " unions." (See Chapter VII.—" League or Union ? Three Tests " —in Clarence Streit's " Union Now.") " Sovereignty " must now be " abandoned " as being the root of all evil, clearly because the " sovereignty " of other states, especially of Germany and of the U.S.S.R., has prevented Anglo-French monopoly capitalism sub-

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jecting Europe to its rule as was the object at least of the Versailles Treaty and the establishment of the League of Nations. In other words the advocates of a " federal solution " by demanding the renunciation of " sovereignty " are actually preparing the ground for the actual sovereignty of Anglo-French capitalism in a Europe from which sovereignty has formally been banished.

For nothing so " undemocratic " as the destruction of capitalism is ever suggested. On the contrary, as we shall see later, one of the strongest claims made for " Federal Union " by its propagandists is that it will make revolution " less likely."

It may be asked, however, how we can reconcile this argument of ours with the fact that British Government spokesmen and their federalising copy boys have openly declared as their aim the restoration to independence of Czechoslovakia and Poland. The simple answer is that Anglo-French capitalism has no intention of restoring either country to a state of *real* independence. Its aim is to win them away from the dominance of German capitalism and establish them as puppet states wholly dependent upon and subservient to itself. The inclusion of such puppet states into a federated monopolist *bloc* under Anglo-French control would obviously not be difficult. Indeed the very act of " freeing " these countries from the " Nazi yoke " would in fact be a step towards the establishment of this monopolist *bloc*.

Thus behind the propaganda for a " federal union " lies the dream and drive of Anglo-French finance capital to restore and stabilise Western imperialism. And this, as Dutt pointed out in his " Notes " last month :

> requires a corresponding co-ordinated control of the colonial empires.

Here again the " federal union " propagandists oblige. W. B. Curry, in his booklet *The Case for Federal Union,* writes :

> The problem of colonies seems to me crucial in the discussion of our present subject, namely, how are we to set about creating world government . . . . It would surely not be difficult, given the will, to create international commissions which would control all the non self-governing parts of the world, charged with the responsibility of governing those areas, first of all in the interests of the inhabitants (remember how Wilson's fifth of his Fifteen Points insisted that " in determining all questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined " and was conveniently forgotten at Versailles—R.G.) and, secondly, in a manner that does equal justice to the claims of all other sections of mankind. The only way to take the question of colonies right out of the arena of international squabbling is to put them once and for all under international control (p. 113).

And again :

> All that any nation has the right to claim is the same access as any other nation to the markets and raw materials of the countries that are now colonial possessions (p.133).

Here quite undisguised is the authentic voice of British imperialism,

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heard long ago when Sir Samuel Hoare affirmed that freedom of access to colonial markets and sources of raw materials was the basic principle of British imperialism, heard again in the elaborations of the Van Zeeland plan and the Pirow proposals and in the following striking passage in *The Times :*

> A common undertaking by the powers concerned in African colonisation .... would recognise that, midway between the great self-governing communities in the South of Africa and those others to the East and on the Mediterranean seaboard which are on the way to self-government, there exists a vast continent of backward races whose future must lie, perhaps for centuries to come, in the guidance of Europeans. It would rule out once for all the theory that these backward races were ever again to be regarded as a factor in the power politics of Europe. It would utterly ban " black armies " raised from their tribes and naval bases established on their coasts. It would eliminate economic barriers between them and between Europeans trading with them, and regulate their production on a common system. It would ensure, in short, that the rôle of Europe towards uncivilised Africa was that of trusteeship in fact as well as in profession. In such a common undertaking Germany might well find an honourable place side by side with the other colonising powers (*Times*, November 16, 1938).

Now with Anglo-French finance-capital dominant in Europe and all potential rivals subjected to its rule in a " federal union," British and French imperialism would lose nothing and gain much from some such " colonial pooling " if it were achieved. For free access to the colonial markets and colonial sources of raw materials would be free only to the British and French and would open to British and French capital areas at present made difficult of penetration by preferential high tariff systems. Moreover, as J. A. Hobson pointed out long ago :

> if capitalists in the several western powers were capable of intelligent co-operation instead of wrangling among themselves for separate national areas of exploitation, they would have combined for a joint international enterprise in Asia, *a project which might have given the whole of western capitalism another generation of active, profitable survival* (*Imperialism*, p. xx).

However the essential point to be understood here is that such " intelligent co-operation " is impossible between rival imperialisms, is impossible under the conditions of capitalism. To advocate such a scheme is either to talk nonsense, and reactionary nonsense at that, or, under cover of " progressive " catchwords, to advocate the robber extension of a particular imperialism, in this case British, at the expense of the conquered powers. More concretely still it is to advocate the strengthening of Western European capitalism in preparation for a new imperialist onslaught, this time against U.S. imperialism, or against Japanese imperialism, certainly against the socialist world base of the U.S.S.R.

Moreover, to declare as Attlee has done against imperialism and not against capitalism or even to imply that it is possible for capitalism

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to " abandon imperialism " as the more official advocates of federal union do, is to " out-Kautsky Kautsky " and to play into the hands of imperialism.

> " Kautsky's reply to Cunow is as follows," wrote Lenin. " ' Imperialism is not modern capitalism. It is only one of the forms of its policy. This policy we can and should fight against ; we can and should fight against imperialism, annexations, etc.' "
>
> " The reply looks good. But it amounts in effect to nothing but a more cunning, more disguised (and therefore more dangerous) propaganda of reconciliation " (*Imperialism*, p 109).

As Lenin wrote elsewhere :

> Capital has become international and monopolistic. The world has been divided among a handful of great powers, i.e., powers successful in great plunder and in oppression of nations . . . . This is how in the epoch of the highest capitalist development, the plundering of almost a billion of the earth's population by a handful of great powers is organised. No other organisation is possible under capitalism . . . .
>
> To test the real power of a capitalist state there is and there can be no other way than war. War is no contradiction to the foundations of private property—on the contrary it is direct and inevitable development of these foundations.
>
> Under capitalism, equal economic progress of the individual concerns or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism no other means for periodically re-establishing destroyed equilibrium are possible outside of crises in industry or of war in politics (*The United States of Europe Slogan*).

The dream or our federal union advocates, stripped of its dressings and disguise is, then, a dream for the establishment of a reactionary monopolostic *bloc* under Anglo-French finance capital ; but this *bloc* —and it can be only a temporary affair at that—can be achieved only by war. It is only logical therefore that the federal unionists who have now become so vocal should be among the most violent supporters of the war.

Now such a monopolist *bloc* would have as the main plank in its programme the destruction of the U.S.S.R. and the restoration of capitalism in that sixth of the world where socialism has won power. Let us see what federal union propagandists say in this connection.

It will be necessary to begin by considering the attitude of the various federal union groups towards the U.S.S.R. and the struggle to preserve peace before the entry of Britain and France into the war.

At this time, in the early part of 1939, the federal unionists were loudly proclaiming that they had the one solution which could prevent war, providing, of course, that their solution was applied " in time " and the " breathing space " allegedly resulting from the Munich " peace " put to proper use. Now the attitude adopted to the Munich diktat by people now ardent supporters of a federated Europe is worth noting for it gives an additional indication of the real character of their " solution." Passing over the significant fact that Lord Lothian and Mr. Ernest Bevin, two of the most violent munichеers in September,

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1938, were two of the main initiators of the federal union movement in this country, we turn to Clarence Streit's " Union Now " to read :

> I cannot say the British and French 'sold out' Prague when they sought nothing for it except a peace that benefits me too (p.46).

And again :

> If I have my own reasons for believing that the continuance of this policy (" appeasement ") will be fatal both to our peace and freedom, I have also reasons others do not have for being grateful that this policy was followed in September. Its great merit then was the reasoning in which Messrs. Chamberlain, Daladier and Benes really placed their faith—that we all want both peace and freedom, that we shall have sacrificed our peace once we go to war for freedom, that by averting war this time there will still remain the possibility of finding somehow a means of saving our peace and our freedom both together. That reasoning is unanswerable, but it means that we must lose no time now in finding that way through (p. 54).

During the period of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations, during the period when the establishment of a Peace Front with the U.S.S.R. which would have saved both peace and freedom and not destroyed both was still possible, federal union provided apparently progressive arguments for the *open* opponents of a Soviet Pact. The idea of a " union of the fifteen founder democracies "—which is not to include the U.S.S.R.—was opposed to that of the Peace Front : the whole idea of collective security was attacked (after it had been blatantly misrepresented); and the differences between the " democracies " and the U.S.S.R. were stressed as much as possible.

But in a very much more direct fashion federal unionism reflects the fundamentally anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary attitude of British finance-capital. The following quotations from Streit's book speak for themselves :

> I would favour admitting Soviet Russia to the nucleus (composed of the fifteen " founder democracies "—R.G.) as soon as it guaranteed freedom of the press and the other Rights of Man to the minimum degree common to the peoples in the nucleus. A world government whose principle of freedom not only allows but encourages the United States to retain its republic and Great Britain its monarchy could not refuse Russia its Soviet. For Russia to try to promote freedom in its territory by communist experiments is no worse than Sweden trying to do the same by socialist experiments, or others by capitalist experiments,—*once Russia guarantees her capitalist and other opposition the same freedom to express and advance their views peacefully as the capitalist democracies guarantee their opposition* (pp. 160-161. My italics—R.G.).
>
> Soviet Russia unquestionably falls short of democracy. Democracy not only allows mankind to choose freely between capitalism and collectivism, but it includes Marxist governments, parties and press as well as *laissez-faire* governments, parties and press. Soviet Russia allows no such choice and no such freedom in its territory, even under its new and more democratic constitution. Is this Soviet policy one of temporary expediency or one of permanent principle ? If it is the former, Soviet Russia must be classed with the immature democracies. If it is the latter, Soviet Russia must be classed among the absolutists

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> . . . . We need more time to answer definitely whether Soviet departures from the basic principles of democracy (i.e., capitalist democracy—R.G.) have been matters of expediency or principle (p. 156).

What clearer proof do we need that the condition for the inclusion of the U.S.S.R. in this " federal union " is that the way shall be opened for the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. ? But that is not all. Having definitely stated that the U.S.S.R. must be classed as an " autocracy " if it refuses to open the front to capitalist restoration and that no " autocracy " can be admitted to the Union, Streit declares :

> In the work of establishing a nucleus world government there will be . . . . room for individuals . . . . from no matter what outside nation. I am confident there will be Germans, Italians, Japanese and other individuals from states outside the nucleus who will contribute more to its foundation than will a good many citizens of the founder democracies. Provision for unlimited growth would, then, help to establish world government both by enabling its constitution to be made by a minimum of states and *by encouraging individual democrats in all outside states to give the movement their wholehearted aid* (p. 158—my italics—R.G.).

In other words, Mr. Streit would " encourage " such " individual democrats " as Kerensky, Trotsky in their intrigues and plottings, to " democratise " the U.S.S.R.

Curry is equally frank. Dealing with the question of whether or not the U.S.S.R. should be included in the Union, he writes :

> It is an integral part of the proposal for Federal Union that its constitution should be democratic. It is therefore essential that throughout the whole area of the Union there should be free speech and free publication . . . . Surely it is plain that Russia at present does not satisfy these criteria . . . . It is not possible to advocate in Moscow that it would be advantageous to the Russian people to restore the Tsardom and the pre-revolutionary economic system (Curry, pp. 188-9).

To Kerensky and Trotsky, Curry would add the White Guard generals !

Besides advocating the " freedom of the capitalist opposition " in the U.S.S.R., the federal union is seen as means of preventing the socialist revolution in the capitalist countries.

Of course, the advocates of a " federal solution " are not " opposed to socialism," providing it is a " liberal and democratic form of socialism " * any more than were the German capitalists and junkers to the " socialist " governments of the Weimar Republic, i.e., providing capitalism is maintained in some form or another and the " socialism " of a country goes no further than the " socialist experiments " in Sweden.† Social-democracy, given every opportunity to govern in the interests of the capitalist class ; social-democracy brought in once more to save capitalism from the socialist revolution, social-democratic " socialism," certainly. But the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class, most certainly not.

* Curry, p.178. † Streit, p.160.

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The following passages from Curry's book make this clear :

> I cannot see that socialism alone would prevent war, since it is by no means obvious that conflict between socialist states would never arise (is Curry thinking of a war between the U.S.S.R. and a capitalist country with a social-democratic government ? For him, both these countries are " socialist "—R.G.) . . . . Nevertheless I agree that the traditions of socialism are international and that a group of socialist states would in all probability federate. I agree therefore that socialism is a possible road to Federal Union. Is it the best road ? . . . . If it were likely within the next few years that all the principal countries of the world would go socialist, adopting a liberal and democratic form of socialism, then it might be worth while to wait for Federal Union to come about in this way, instead of going for it directly. But time is an absolutely vital factor. . . . . The issue (of socialism or disaster) is not . . . . vital . . . . Mankind is not faced with the immediate alternative, socialism or disaster. It is quite conceivable that certain forms of liberal capitalism might endure for some generations yet, and granted freedom from war, give a tolerable life for the mass of mankind. The issue that confronts the world is not socialism or catastrophe. It is cosmopolis or catastrophe (Curry, pp. 178-9).
>
> We do not know yet to what extent socialism, in a technically advanced country like England or America, is a possible or desirable system. In our economic arrangements there is room for much experiment and we should avoid dictation by doctrinaires . . . . (Curry, pp. 179).
>
> It is not true that there will be the sort of upheaval in men's daily lives that would make the change profoundly revolutionary. I do not therefore believe that Federal Union once it is understood, will encounter the same psychological obstacles that socialism is bound to encounter (Curry, p. 180—i.e., federal union will be acceptable to the capitalist class—R.G.).
>
> I do not see how any political structure can make revolution impossible . . . . but Federal Union would make revolution extremely improbable and . . . . this is an argument for Federal Union " (Curry, p. 180).

Thus, the fundamentally counter-revolutionary character of this new " solution " of all the world's ills is clearly exposed.

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War Effects in Palestine and the Near East

BY I. RENNAP

I.

> To spend the day outside the public buildings of Jerusalem is to see all sorts of deputations . . . . deputations of unemployed from the citrus and building industries who have become unemployed through the war . . . . deputations of newly-arrived immigrants unable to find work . . . . deputations of merchants who are sorely pressed through loss of export markets . . . . deputations of industrialists on whom credit restrictions are having a catastrophic effect . . . . many other deputations of a similar character come and go practically every day.

THESE LINES, WRITTEN by the Jerusalem correspondent of the London *Jewish Times* (November 23, 1939), summarise in a nutshell the catastrophic effects of the war on the peoples of Palestine.

The citrus industry, the backbone of Palestine's economy, is in a parlous state. More than half the crop cannot be marketed abroad. The banks are sharply restricting credits ; while Arab and Jewish citrus growers are faced with ruin. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (November 28, 1939), reports that " There is hardly a citrus grower in the country who is solvent."

The Jewish and Arab workers, however, are the worst sufferers. Tens of thousands of these workers and their families are dependent for their livelihood on the citrus industry. Unemployment has shot up tremendously ; whilst strikes and all kinds of labour disputes are becoming more frequent.

The shattering effect of the war on Palestine and on the Arab lands in the Near East is bound to have far reaching effects on both the Jews and the Arabs under British and French imperialist rule. It must accelerate in the Near East a process already sharply developing in all the colonial countries in this second Imperialist war, namely, the movement of the colonial peoples who will seize the first opportunity to strike a blow for their national independence.

British and French Imperialism are well aware of this danger in the Near East, which, for them, is a vitally strategic spot on their Imperial lines of communication. To safeguard their strategic aims in this area they are attempting to make use of the method which, for them, proved so successful in the last war. This method is to make once again the Arabs and Jews their pawns in the Near East, in order to further their Imperialist war aims. In this task they are being assisted by the reactionary Arab and Jewish leaders. Four factors point in this direction :

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(a) the support given to the war by the Egyptian and Iraqi Governments ; (b) the new pro-British orientation of the dominant Arab Palestine leadership ; (c) the recently concluded Anglo-Turkish pact ; and (d) the Zionist pledge to support British war aims.

II.

Soon after the outbreak of war the Egyptian and Iraqi Governments declared their intention of fulfilling their Treaty obligations to Britain and came in on the side of the Allies. By so doing these pro-British puppet governments did not reflect the feeling of their working peoples on whose shoulders will be thrust the burden of the war. The Arabs in the Near East, who know only too well what Imperialism means after 20 years of British and French rule, are not anxious to sacrifice themselves to defend a system which has brought them bombardment from the air, the blowing up of whole working-class districts, and the orphaning of thousands of children. The anti-imperialist feeling among these peoples reflected itself in the wave of sympathy and support for the revolt of the Palestine Arabs and their bitter hatred of the repressive measures taken against the Palestine Arabs by the British military. Yet the Egyptian and Iraqi Governments are helping to tie the Arab world—where there is such strong anti-imperialist feeling—to the war machine of the Allies. Particularly have they made every effort to help the British Government drag in the dominant Palestine Arab leadership behind British Imperialist war aims.

Among the Palestine Arab leaders Britain has long had her trusted agents and supporters. The " moderate " Arabs, the pro-British Nashashibis, pledged their support to Britain within a week of war being declared. But the Arab Higher Committee, which is still recognised as the dominant leadership of the Palestine Arabs, had to be strongly prevailed upon to abandon their anti-British stand. *Falastin* and *Ad Difa*, the organs of the Arab Higher Committee, may have published long leading articles calling upon the Arabs to support Britain. But Whitehall, even now, is still suspicious of the wily and scheming Mufti who has been exiled from Palestine. The Egyptian and Iraqi Governments, however, have come to the help of Britain. Every pressure has been brought to bear on the Mufti and his followers on the Arab Higher Committee to come to terms with Britain. And the result of the backdoor negotiations between these Palestine Arab leaders and the Egyptian and Iraqi Ministers, representing Whitehall, appears to be that the Mufti is making a bid " for reconciliation with the British Government and a return to Palestine." He is reported to have even accepted, in principle, the proposals in the White Paper (in which certain limited concessions and promises of reforms are made to the Palestine Arabs which definitely check Zionist development in Palestine, and which the Arab Higher Committee categorically rejected when it was first issued). That the Mufti may now be coming to terms

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with Britain is quite understandable. No doubt he had expected the war to extend immediately to the Mediterranean through Italy coming in on the side of Germany. This might have created possibilities for an Arab revolt against Britain and France with Axis support. This possibility has faded with Italy, meantime, remaining neutral. Moreover, it has been known for some time that a secret agreement existed between the Mufti and the Nazi Government whereby the former would be made, with Nazi support, head of a united Palestine-Syrian state, linked up with the Third Reich. Now it appears that Von Papen, the German Ambassador to Turkey, " offered " Palestine, Syria, the Mosul oil-fields and even Iran to Turkey in return for Turkish support of Nazi Imperialist aims. The Mufti, therefore, may have come to the conclusion that to-day, in the present war situation, he can expect precious little from his Nazi Allies ; and that on balance, the interests of that section of the Arab landlord and capitalist classes which are represented by the Arab Higher Committee, can best be served by reaching a compromise with British Imperialism. Thus the Mufti and his clique have become, in common with the pro-British Arab monarchs and their governments, the recruiting sergeants of Britain. They are definitely the enemies of the Arab people and of Arab national liberation. They have become agents of Imperialism, assisting Britain to draw in the Palestine Arabs in particular and the Arab peoples as a whole with their aspirations for national freedom from all Imperialism, into an Imperialist war to defend and perpetuate that Imperialist system which will always enslave them.

But these British Arab reactionaries are not the only allies of Britain and their aims in the Eastern Mediterranean. The recently concluded Anglo-Turkish treaty has for its *immediate* aim to bring Turkey, which has always opposed Arab Nationalist aims because she has considered them a challenge to her hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean, into the orbit of the Allies against Nazi Imperialism. The ground for this recent alliance had already been prepared last summer by France ceding to Turkey the Sanjak of Alexandretta in the teeth of hostile opposition by the Syrian nationalists. Now Turkey has been swung in completely on the side of the Allies with fat financial subsidies from Britain. One of the results of this pact is that Turkey is now Britain's gendarme in the Near East and will be used as such against any Arab attempt for National Freedom.

In spite of all these intrigues and Imperialist double-dealing at the expense of the Arab peoples, the seeds of a new wave of revolts are already inherent in the Near East. Syria, since last spring, when the constitution was suspended and when this was followed later by the ceding of the Sanjak, has been a seething cauldron of revolt. The suppression of the French Communists in the name of " fighting for democracy " has had no small effect on the Syrian working people. For the French Communist Party was the only party in the Chamber

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to demand strongly the ratification of the Franco-Syrian Treaty ; while the Syrian Communist Party has a fairly wide influence among the Syrian workers. In Palestine, the revolt of 1936, the most widespread and deeprooted of all the Arab revolts in Palestine since 1920, has, in the main, been crushed. But the first few months of the war have already inflicted terrible hardships on an already suffering Arab population—as well as on the Jews. A continuation and intensification of these hardships will force them, in common with the other colonial peoples, to seize their opportunity and strike once again for their independence. Already voices are being heard among the younger and more progressive leaders in Palestine that the Iraqi and Egyptian Governments, as well as the Nashashibis and other Palestine Arab leaders, are *not* voicing the sentiments of the Arab peoples. This they disclosed in a letter sent to the Colonial Secretary, declaring that if this war is for the victory of freedom and democracy, Britain (as well as France) desiring Arab support for such a war must give the Arabs their National rights. The continuation and the possible extension of the war to the Near East, which may result in the Arab people receiving some of the hardest knocks in this war, will undoubtedly push forward these more progressive elements at the expense of the present Arab " leaders " who have now become the flunkeys of Whitehall. And, above all, the declaration of the Indian people within a month of war being declared that they will not fight for Imperialism is bound to have far reaching effects on the Arab masses in the Near East.

It is within this broad setting of the second Imperialist war, and the perspectives which this opens up for impending Colonial National revolutions in general, and the Arabian movement for independence in particular, that the future and security of the Jews in Palestine must be viewed by every progressive, Zionist or non-Zionist. For it must be remembered that in Palestine there are to-day half a million Jews whose right to be in Palestine and live their own national life, side by side with their Arab neighbours, unmolested and free from persecution cannot be denied. But at the same time it must also be noted that the Yishuv (Palestine Jewry) is situated not only within a key point of what may become an important theatre of war, but what may also become a key point in the impending struggles of the colonial peoples in the Near and Middle East. Therefore, it becomes imperative to consider what great dangers for the Yishuv and its future progress lie in the promise given by the Zionist leaders pledging the support of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement to the Imperialist war aims of the Allies.

III.

The outbreak of war found the Yishuv and the Zionist movement undergoing a crisis unequalled in the whole of their history. Last May, when the White Paper was issued, saw the cynical tearing up of the Balfour Declaration when it could no longer further British Imperialist

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aims in Palestine. For twenty years the Zionist leaders had believed and had called upon the world to believe that Britain would keep the promise made to the Zionist leaders by Balfour in 1917 on behalf of the British Government. Britain, they asserted, would give every support to the establishment of a Jewish National Home and, subsequently, a Jewish State in Palestine. In doing this the Zionist leaders became a party to British aims in dominating Palestine. This alliance of the Zionist leaders with British Imperialism in the last war, which was consecrated in the Balfour Declaration, meant, in effect, that the innocent Jewish settler who came to start life anew in Palestine, as well as the Yishuv as a whole, became an instrument used by Britain against Arab Nationalist aims. Behind the humbug of restoring a people to its old homeland, the honest and sincere national aspirations of a section of Jewry were unscrupulously played off by Britain against the striving for National Independence of the Palestine Arabs as a means with which to rule over Palestine. This Imperialist policy, to which the present Zionist leaders were a party, brought bloody conflicts and antagonisms between the two peoples where none had hitherto existed. But, with the Facist drive into the Arab world in recent years, it became necessary for Whitehall to dish out some kind of " appeasement " to the Arabs. This " appeasement " was the White Paper, which repudiated the Balfour Declaration when Zionism could no longer serve as an instrument of rule over Palestine, and " rewarded " the Zionist leaders for their twenty years of faithful service to Britain—with minority rights for the Yishuv. The White Paper struck the Jewish world like a thunderbolt. Never before had there been expressed such bitter anti-Chamberlain feeling within the Yishuv and the whole of Jewry. Britain had broken her pledge to the Zionists ; and a realisation of how much faith could be put into any Imperialist promise was steadily seeping in among the Jews in Palestine and the rank and file of the Zionist movement. Even those faithful servants of Whitehall, Dr. Chaim Weizman and Ben Gurion, the Zionist leaders, were compelled to say that Britain had acted treacherously. The bitterest attacks were made on the White Paper and its authors at the 21st Zionist Congress held last August. But at this same congress, which took place just prior to the outbreak of the war, *these same Zionist leaders pledged the support of the Yishuv and their movement to British war aims*. Once again, as in 1914, behind high sounding phrases that this war is one for the defence of small and weak nations, these same leaders are dragging the sincere aspirations and hopes of a section of Jewry into the vortex of Imperialist power politics with the foolish hope that this time they may get a just reward, perhaps some " new " Balfour Declaration which will not suffer the same fate as the one of 1917. Like the Bourbons these Zionist leaders have forgotten nothing and learned nothing from the preceding twenty years of British rule in Palestine. Weizman, speaking recently in London, proudly compared this period with the one of 1914, when the

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Zionist Movement also threw in its weight with the Allies. And the conclusion he drew from this comparison was that support of the Allies meant " supporting the Yishuv in advancing to its goal ! "

Thus, the Zionist leaders are feverishly throwing themselves into the work of helping to organise the Jews of Palestine on a war basis. A hundred and thirty thousand Jews have been organised for the defence of Palestine. The Jewish Agency has already offered the War Office Jewish units for military service in Palestine ; while the *Zionist Review* of November 3, 1939, complains about the Palestine administration " hesitating so long and so obviously to accept the recruitment of Jewish units." *Davar*, the reactionary organ of the Histadrut (Palestine Federation of Labour), has carried a controversy whether the Palestine Jews should serve in the armed forces in Palestine or on the Western Front. The Arabs, meanwhile, are being strongly criticised for lack of enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies.

All this is being watched apprehensively by the Arabs in Palestine. In this voluntary Jewish force for " National Defence " they see an instrument which may be used against them to keep " law and order " in Palestine should the occasion arise.

Weizman is attempting to make the Yishuv into a tool which may be used to prevent the Arab people from striking once again for their National freedom. And in doing this Weizman is placing the Yishuv on the mouth of a volcano. This second Imperialist war has placed the renewed and intensified struggles of the colonial peoples for National Independence on the order of the day ; and when the objective situation is ripe for this, they will sweep from their path every stumbling-block which will be placed there by their Imperialist rulers. In Palestine Weizman policy is one which will make the Yishuv the gendarme of British reaction against any revival of Arab activity for National liberation. Such a policy must be opposed by every progressive, for it spells disaster for the Yishuv. No right thinking person, Zionist or Non-Zionist, can allow a section of an oppressed people to become a tool to help in stifling the struggle for freedom of another oppressed people.

In past issues of this journal we have shown the bankruptcy and and danger of Weizman's pro-Imperialist policy. To-day, in the present war situation, his policy is even more dangerous for the Yishuv. In the past we have pointed to a more progressive leadership in the Zionist ranks around which the progressive element in the Yishuv must be mobilised, as an alternative leadership to that of Weizman. To-day, it is even more necessary for us to do so, in view of the danger in which Weizman's policy is placing the Yishuv, and also to bring into the open that which the Zionists seek to hide, namely, *that in Palestine there are elements among the Zionist leaders who oppose Weizman's policy because they realise, as we do, what it will lead to.* These progressive Zionist leaders have a policy which can become the basis of bringing

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together both peoples in Palestine.

IV.

In the *Jewish Times* (November 28, 1939) there is a report of an interview with Khalvariski, a veteran Zionist leader, who for years has stood at the head of the Arab department of the Zionist Organisation and has genuinely and sincerely worked for an honourable understanding with the Arabs. He declared that even to-day it is not too late to reach such an understanding. He complained that " the Zionist leaders who not long ago admitted their past mistakes in regard to their attitude to the Arabs have not yet to this day changed their past attitude." He said further that mere loyalty to Britain and dependence on her " gratitude " in return for services rendered is no solution of the Arab Jewish problem. It can only bring " the same results as those which followed the last war." *One path only remains—the one of genuinely seeking an understanding with the Arabs.*

How can this be done ? From among many constructive proposals which can help tremendously to bring together Arabs and Jews he proposes the joint organisation of the Arab and Jewish peasantry in mixed co-operative and peasant organisations with the Arab peasant benefiting from the superior agricultural methods of the Jewish farmer. These organisations would defend the interests of the peasantry as a whole. He proposes also the establishment by the Jewish Agency of credit institutions to give assistance to the needy Arab peasants. Particularly does he stress the necessity of *organising the Arab and Jewish workers in joint Trade Union associations.* It becomes clear from this interview that his proposals are definitely aimed at organisationally bringing together the labouring and progressive sections of both peoples into joint economic and political activity for the benefit of Jews and Arabs alike. *And he remarks significantly that the cost to the Jews of putting these proposals into operation would have been a fraction of the cost of the damage sustained by the Yishuv through three years of unrest and conflict in Palestine.*

Such proposals might have come from *Koel Haam* (" Voice of the People "), the organ of the illegal C.P. of Palestine, which has continually worked for an Arab Jewish understanding along similar lines as a basis for joint Arab Jewish struggle against Imperialism for a free liberated Palestine. Yet Khalvariski is no Communist. Neither is he an anti-imperialist. He is an honest, well respected and far-seeing Zionist leader who for a long period has held the highest positions in the Zionist organisation. For years he has realised the reactionary character of Weizman's pro-Imperialist policy and has not been afraid to criticise it sharply and warn the Yishuv of its dangerous consequences. Khalvariski is one of the leading figures of a group calling itself Al Paroshus Darchainu (" at the parting of our ways "), in which are represented other Zionist leaders like Kaplanski, Dr. Magnes, and

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left-wing elements of the Histadrut (Palestine Federation of Labour), who hold similar views to Khalvariski and who are working for an Arab Jewish understanding on the lines mentioned above.

It must be made clear that Khalvariski's proposals do not go as far as the liberation of Palestine and the Near East from Imperialism. But the unity and fraternisation of the Jewish and Arab toiling peoples in joint peasant and workers' organisations to defend their common economic and political interests can form the basis on which both peoples can be drawn together in common struggle against the common enemy. For Imperialist reaction and its agents among the Arabs and Jews will do everything to prevent this fraternisation. But they will fail if this joint organisation of both peoples is carried out effectively and with goodwill on both sides. And in the coming struggle which will follow, as the blows of the war fall more heavily on the peoples of the Near East, the Yishuv, and particularly its toiling elements, will begin to learn more and more from close co-operation with the Arabs that its destiny is linked up with the cause of Arab liberation and its inevitable victory in a free and liberated Near East, which will then be able to absorb many thousand of suffering persecuted Jews who seek to start life anew in that part of the world. On the other hand, the Arabs will also learn from co-operation with the Jews the great rôle the Yishuv can play as the leaven in a nationally awakening Near East to the economic and cultural advantage of the Arab world.

The historic task of organising the Jewish and Arab working masses against Imperialism and its war aims with its Arab and Jewish recruiting sergeants falls upon the organised Jewish workers in the Histadrut. In the present sharpening situation, when the present Arab leadership is rotten to the core, and when the more progressive Arab leadership is still weak and without mass influence, the Jewish working-class movement of Palestine, numbering 108,000, must throw off its reactionary anti-Arab and pro-Imperialist leaders like Ben Gurion and become the force in Palestine which can unite the Jewish and Arab working people. This would draw round itself all progressive elements from both sides. In this way can the Histadrut build up what could become in Palestine the spearhead of the drive against Imperialism and the war, and play a decisive rôle in the great liberation movements which will shake the Near East. Only along these lines lie freedom and self-determination for the Yishuv and the Arab peoples in a free, liberated Palestine and Near East.

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"Labour Monthly" Readers' Groups

We have received an interesting letter from one of our readers telling us that a group of readers in a North London suburb have established a "LABOUR MONTHLY Readers' Group" and have held a first and successful meeting.

Their purpose is to provide a regular, monthly opportunity for readers to meet together for discussion of the Notes and articles in the current issue. They believe such discussion will deepen the value of the paper for each individual reader. They believe regular attendance at such a Group will help to develop the capacity for swift and correct appraisal of world events, equipping each one of the Group to play an ever more helpful rôle in his political party, trade union, co-operative, workshop, place of work and in discussion amongst his friends.

Condition of membership is being a reader of LABOUR MONTHLY.

The founders of this first Group find their district requires two or three more and they have therefore laid down a few general principles. First, they consider a Group should not exceed more than about 12 members. When rather more are attending, those living conveniently near to some other available house should split off and form a new Group, attracting to it new members towards a further maximum of 12 ; and so on. There seems no reason why a member should not sometimes attend a different Group if on particular occasions he cannot go to his usual one.

Each Group has a Convenor. Groups, it is suggested, should resolve to limit themselves to discussion and should eschew any form of Group activity. The practical task apart from discussion should be to collect a fixed minimum sum every month to help the paper, and to win new readers.

We have no hesitation in saying that we warmly welcome this promising development. It is not difficult to see how the influence and value of our paper must extend if other readers up and down the country will copy the example of our friends in North London. Any readers who would like to attend or help to form a Readers' Group should let us know and we will notify postal subscribers in the same area, some of whom might well be interested. We look forward to being able to publish a first list of Group Convenors in an early issue. We are not able to take any part ourselves in organising such Groups. This is essentially a matter for personal initiative.

We would very much like to have the name and address of Convenors of all Groups which may be formed and to hear of their progress. If discussion sometimes reveals a need for clarification on some point, we should like to hear about it and will arrange for replies to be given.

EDITORIAL BOARD.

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DOCUMENT OF THE MONTH

Programme of the People's Government of Finland

DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE FINNISH PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 1, 1939

BY THE WILL of the people, indignant at the criminal policy of the contemptible Government of Cajander, Erkko and Tanner, the new Government of our country—the *Provisional People's Government*—was formed today in Eastern Finland.

This Government hereby calls the entire Finnish people to a determined struggle for the overthrow of the hangmen and war provocateurs. The reactionary avid plutocracy which in 1918, aided by troops of the foreign imperialists, drowned the democratic freedom of the Finnish toiling people in a sea of blood, has transformed our country into a White Guard hell for the toilers. Having sold the interests of the country's independence, the plutocratic rulers of Finland, jointly with all kinds of imperialist enemies of the Finnish and Soviet peoples, ceaselessly hatched plans of anti-Soviet war provocations and finally plunged our country into the furnace of war against the Socialist Soviet Union—the great friend of the Finnish people.

In this critical situation the wide masses of the Finnish toiling people, who always desired and desire to live in peace with the peoples of the country of the Soviets, consider it their elementary right and their sacred duty to take the fate of the fatherland into their own reliable hands. In various parts of the country the people have already risen and proclaimed the formation of a democratic republic. Part of the soldiers of Finland's army has already sided with the new Government backed by the people.

The Soviet Union, which has always respected the independence of Finland and for some 20 years has tolerated vile war provocations on the part of the adventurist rulers of White Finland, has now been confronted with the necessity of putting an end to these threats to its independence by the use of the forces of the Red Army.

This aim also fully corresponds to the vital interests of our people. That is why the masses of the people of Finland meet with tremendous enthusiasm and welcome the valiant invincible Red Army, being aware that it is marching to Finland not as a conqueror but as the friend and liberator of our people.

The People's Government of Finland, being deeply convinced that the Soviet Union pursues no aims directed against the independence of our country, fully approves and supports the actions of the Red Army on Finnish territory. It regards them as an invaluable assistance to the Finnish people on the part of the Soviet Union for the purpose of eliminating as soon as possible, by our joint efforts, the most dangerous seat of war created in Finland by the criminal Government of war provocateurs. To accomplish this task as soon as possible the People's Government of Finland invites the Government of the U.S.S.R. to render the democratic republic of Finland all the assistance of the forces of the Red Army necessary.

For participation in the joint struggle hand in hand with the heroic Red Army of the U.S.S.R., the People's Government of Finland has already formed the *First Finnish Army Corps* which in the course of coming battles will receive reinforcements from volunteers coming from the revolutionary workers and peasants and must become the strong backbone of the future People's Army of Finland.

To the First Finnish Army Corps is accorded the honour of bringing the banner of the Finnish democratic republic into the capital and hoisting it on the roof of the presidential palace, to the joy of the working people and to the awe of the enemies of the people.

Our State must be a *democratic Republic*, serving the interests of the people, unlike the plutocratic Republic of Cajander and Erkko, which served the interests of the capitalists and landlords. However, our State is not a State of the Soviet type, because a Soviet régime cannot be established by the efforts of a Government alone without the consent of the whole people, in particular the peasantry.

In conformity with the above, our Government is a *People's Government of the Democratic Republic of Finland.* It will rely for support on a broad people's front of the workers. The People's Government in its present composition regards itself as a provisional government. Immediately upon its arrival in Helsinki, the capital

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of the country, it will be reorganised and its composition enlarged by the inclusion of representatives of the Government parties and groups participating in the People's Front of the workers. The final composition of the People's Government, its powers and actions, are to be sanctioned by a *Diet*, elected on a basis of universal, equal, direct suffrage, with a secret ballot.

The People's Government of Finland regards as its primary task the overthrow of the Government of Finnish White Guards, the rout of its armed forces, conclusion of peace, and ensuring the independence and security of Finland by means of the establishment of lasting friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

The People's Government of Finland have addressed the Government of the U.S.S.R. with a proposal to conclude *a mutual assistance pact* between Finland and the Soviet Union, and to comply with the age-old national hope of the Finnish people for the re-union of the Karelian people with the Finnish people in a single and independent State of Finland.

The People's Government of Finland has every ground to hope that its firm course of establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union will enable the Government of the U.S.S.R. to comply with this proposal. The People's Government desires to maintain friendly relations also with all other States. It recognises the economic and financial obligations of Finland towards other States insofar as these obligations do not contradict Finland's sovereignty and insofar as any of these States will not take hostile steps against the Democratic Republic of Finland and its People's Government.

In its *internal policy*, the People's Government sets itself the following tasks :

(1) The creation of a People's Army of Finland.
(2) The institution of State control over the large private banks and large industrial enterprises, and the realisation of measures to assist small and medium enterprises.
(3) The realisation of measures for the complete elimination of unemployment.
(4) The reduction of the working day to eight hours, provision of two weeks' summer holiday for workers, and the reduction of rents for workers and employees.
(5) Confiscation of all lands belonging to big landowners, without touching the lands and properties of the peasants, and to transfer the confiscated land to peasants who have little or no land at all.
(6) Peasants to be exempted from the payment of income tax arrears.
(7) State assistance in every form to the poor peasants, in the first place by giving them additional land and pastures, and when possible also forests for their domestic needs, from the lands confiscated from the big landowners.
(8) Democratisation of the State organisation, administration and courts.
(9) Enhancement of State subsidies for cultural needs and reorganisation of schools; to ensure the attendance at schools of all workers' children and other needy people; to aid in every form the development of public education, science, literature and arts in a progressive spirit.

It turns out that the plutocratic Government which did its utmost to ruin our country, has resigned, having lost all the support of the people. This hated Government has been replaced by Tanner's Government. But Tanner is the enemy of our people just like Cajander. Tanner's Government is not a single jot better, if not even worse, than Cajander's Government.

Chase these hangmen as far as possible from Finland ! Throw down this bankrupted Government gang ! Arise, oppressed working people of Finland ! Rise to the courageous fight against the tyranny of your oppressors and hangmen ! Arise every citizen to whom the future of our country is dear ! Let us throw down this black pack of reaction from the shoulders of the people ! Let us clear the road for progress and the people's culture, for the age-old national aspirations of our people ! Let the cause of the workers, peasants and working intelligentsia triumph ! Onward to victory under the banner of a free independent democratic Republic of Finland !

Signed : *Otto Kuusinen* (Chairman, People's Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs); *Mauri Rosenberg* (Assistant Chairman, People's Government and Minister of Finance); *Aksel Antille* (Minister of Defence); *Tuure Lehen* (Minister of Internal Affairs); *Armas Ejkija* (Minister for Agriculture); *Inkori Lehtinen* (Minister of Education); *Paavo Prokkenen* (Minister for Karelia), in the town of *Terijoki*, December 1, 1939.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Science in Antiquity

Science and Politics in the Ancient World by Benjamin Farrington. (Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.)

" THIS IS A book about the obstacles to the spread of a scientific outlook in the ancient world," Professor Farrington writes in an introductory chapter. It is indeed this, but much more also ; for his analysis of those aspects of classical society which are involved in his argument is based upon a firm understanding of the importance of the class struggle. The result is a book which must, one may suppose, exert a revolutionary influence upon classical scholarship ; and, equally important, which enables the ordinary reader to relate the problems of Greek civilisation in decline to the immediate problems of contemporary life.

How was it, he begins by asking, that the brilliant scientific achievements of the Ionian philosophers in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. were eclipsed in the 4th, and, in spite of the efforts of such men as Epicurus and Lucretius, were by the 6th century of our era to all intents and purposes extinguished ? The question has often been asked and the blame has usually been attributed to popular superstition, let loose by the spread of democratic notions. But Farrington clearly refutes this answer by showing that superstition, far from being a spontaneous product of the people, was consciously encouraged and enforced by the upper classes in Athens, and later in Rome, as a weapon in their struggle with the rising democratic forces.

Already by the middle of the 5th century the problem of " adjusting contemporary institutions to meet the great upheaval of the old ways of life represented by the Ionian enlightenment " had become a central one. It was, as Farrington maintains in a most persuasive chapter, the theme of Aeschylus's great trilogy, the *Prometheia*. But if Aeschylus's solution was a plea for caution and restraint on the part both of those who would forward and of those who would restrain reform, his counsels did not prevail with the Athenian nobility. They were all too well aware that the spread of Ionian materialism amongst those classes newly enfranchised by democracy was a threat to the very bases of their political power, and the idealistic revolt of Socrates was a reflection of this realisation.

But it remained for his disciple, Plato, to elaborate a philosophical system, which would " banish for ever the possibility of popular revolts and establish a class-divided society on a secure basis." This he did by the invention of the political, or, as he called it, the "golden," lie ; the conscious imposition on the mass of the people of religious superstitions known by the law-givers to be untrue. This aspect of Plato's teaching has usually been shuffled off by his commentators, and it is one of Farrington's most important contributions that he should have shown so conclusively how important an influence it had on the fate of Greek society. For in order to sustain his belief in the lie as a political instrument he had inevitably to range himself against the protagonists of the scientific view ; against, that is to say, all that was most progressive in Greek thought. As Farrington exclaims, " who with any sense of the tragedy of the twenty-three centuries that separate us from Plato can read his proposals without a sense of horror ? "

It is clear, then, that Farrington's opinion of the importance of Plato

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differs radically from that usually accepted, which sees in him and Aristotle the full maturity of Greek thought, while regarding those who went before as merely adolescent and those who came after as already in decline. But Farrington's view does not rest only on his criticism of Plato. Having in an earlier chapter established the durable value of the two great achievements of pre-Socratic science, the atomic theory of the constitution of matter and Hippocratic medicine, he next proceeds to a study of Epicurus, the great materialist philosopher, who was born seven or eight years after the death of Plato and reached his majority about the time of Aristotle's death. Here again his opinion is of vital importance and based on impressively convincing evidence. Epicurus, he contends, far from representing the effete twilight of Greek thought, strove to invigorate the society of his time precisely by resuming the Ionian tradition. " It was (his) master-conception that a true knowledge of the Nature of Things was the sovereign remedy for the ills of mankind, both individually and socially " ; and, arising from this, it was his specific originality that he was " the first man known to history to have organised a movement for the liberation of mankind at large from superstition."

One cannot do more in a review than draw attention to the vitality and ranging scholarship of the chapter devoted to the exposition and rehabilitation of Epicurus's philosophy, but it is important to note his conclusion that Epicureanism was a popular movement. As such it was recognised and feared by the Athenian oligarchics, who sought to suppress it—much as the ruling class in our own day opposes the spread of Marxism—by recourse to the unscientific sophistries of Platonism. And it was as such that it spread to Rome, where as early as 173 B.C. we find the Senate expelling two of its propagandists for " introducing pleasures." That the " pleasure " which the Roman Fathers feared above all was " the freedom of mind that comes from discarding false notions about the gods," Farrington, I think, makes amply clear ; and his view is supported by an impressive quotation (p. 167) from the statesman, Polybius. Reaction, in its struggle against the spread of Ionian enlightenment, against the spirit of scientific enquiry, had now enlisted the support of Roman power, but though the victory was to be overwhelming and to endure for many centuries, there was yet to be one more noble and passionate protest. And it is to this protest that Farrington devotes his most moving chapter.

The greatness of the *De Rerum Natura* as a poem has never been disputed, but I doubt if its importance in the history of ideas has ever been so conclusively argued, or its noble beauty more genuinely appreciated. The majority of critics hitherto, unwilling to accept Lucretius's moral indignation with the society of his age at its face value, have attributed his passionate intensity to morbid exaggeration, very much in the way that academic literary historians still attempt to castrate the disgust and hatred of a Byron or a Shelley. Farrington, on the contrary, insists that Lucretius's " exaltation of the Ionian tradition of natural philosophy over the authority of the Oracle of Delphi . . . was an essential element in that revolution of the mind of society at which the poet, following in the footsteps of Epicurus, aimed." Moreover, he shows that this social significance of the poem was not lost upon his contemporaries. This is made clear by the attitude of Cicero, the very type of " ruling class mentality," who, though admiring in private, publicly refused to recognise the poem. Incidentally, one may compare the behaviour of Pope towards the Deists and Freethinkers, borrowing their ideas while virulently attacking them ; and indeed this parallel could be interestingly pursued, for it certainly seems that the attitude of the 18th century ruling class towards the materialist philosophers was very similar to that of Cicero

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and his circle towards Lucretius and the Epicureans. In both cases it was dictated by the same fear: that popular enlightenment should successfully challenge their political supremacy. Farrington stresses this point by revealing the effort that was being made to revive the Roman state religion "as an instrument of oligarchic repression" at the very time when Lucretius was composing his masterpiece. In the struggle between reaction and progress the revivifying ideas of the past were overcome, but the significance of his challenge still remains as an encouragement for us to-day.

Such, in brief, is the main purport of Farrington's book. Its importance for a Marxist understanding of social history is indisputable and it is a model of exposition—learned, without being heavy; informed with a glowing appreciation of the literature and philosophy of the past, and a keen understanding of the problems of the present; and written with an ease and brilliance that is all too rare in progressive writing. It is, however, admittedly no more than a essay. Its great value is that it approaches the problems of ancient society from the point of view of the class struggle, but the exact nature of that struggle remains to be elucidated. That the development of a scientific attitude to life was bound up with the spread of democracy and that religious obscurantism was converted into a political weapon by the ruling class is made clear. But the relation of democratic and oligarchic state forms to the masses of the people and to the economic bases of society are only casually referred to, and it would clearly be mistaken to assume any close resemblance between modern democracy and a democracy based on slavery. Moreover, we could wish for a further elaboration of the nature of Ionian science. Farrington tells us enough for us to conclude with confidence that Thales, and Anaximander, Heraclitus and Democritus laid the bases of scientific method, and he is particularly interesting in his account of Hippocrates's insistence upon the necessity of combining theory with practice. But one would welcome a fuller account both of the methods and achievements of ancient science. There is, however, reason to hope that *Science and Politics in the Ancient World* will inspire other scholars to approach these problems with an equally lively understanding of the historical materialist approach, since Farrington's essay has already produced such rich results.

DOUGLAS GARMAN.

The Philistine within the Gate

Barbarians at the Gate, by Leonard Woolf. (Gollancz. 6s.)

THIS IS A book designed to show that Pericles, Stalin and Herr Hitler are all concerned with civilisation. "All three have a vision of a particular kind of communal life; that is their aim or ideal; their policy consists of the means whereby they think to attain this object, the world society . . . ." There is, however, a difference between the common "ideal" of Pericles, Thomas Jefferson, Stalin and Mr. Churchill and that which is shared by Hitler and the ancient Spartans. Between these two ideals, the latter being barbarism, there is a struggle. But there is no need to worry about Mussolini and Hitler because these are bound to collapse. What Mr. Woolf is worried

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about is the barbarism in the citadel—the weakness on the side of civilisation. For Civilisation, he says, requires first democracy, second socialism, third principles (viz., justice, truth, tolerance, humanity). British Liberals lack the second, Communists the first and third. If Liberals were socialists, and Socialism in the U.S.S.R. were Liberal, it would be better for all. From this standpoint an attack on the U.S.S.R. is developed.

It should be added that from page 100 onwards the author discourses on "the Three Factors" in any society that mainly determine social relations; "power," "economics" and "ideas." If any complain that Mr. Woolf here repeats Dühring's fallacies exploded 60 years ago by Engels, they must admit that at any rate his examples from the Masai and Kikuyu tribes would never have occurred to Professor Dühring.

The manner of dealing with the U.S.S.R. is familiar—"Stalin's aim is a Communist society, the Kingdom of Heaven as revealed by the Communist Manifesto, the Prophet Marx and his apostle Lenin"—but after this sour opening it is a little surprising to find on page 123 that Mr. Woolf claims "up to a point" to be a "Marxian Socialist." As later on he turns out to have swallowed something of the anti-Marxist Toynbee's view of history but without making any claims about it, we may guess he is like the man who said he was a Christian up to a point, and also a bit of a Buddhist, with some Voodoo and Shinto thrown in.

It would be a waste of space of the LABOUR MONTHLY to enter into any detailed refutation of this latest example of anti-Soviet propaganda or to trace the development of Mr. Woolf into a member of what the New Masses calls "The-Russia-was-O.K.-until . . . . Society." But it is the case that twenty years ago Mr. Woolf considered it necessary to assemble facts when it was a study of Imperialism; and in dealing with the U.S.S.R. he no longer seems to feel that necessity.

Well over twenty years ago Mr. Woolf wrote a novel on the East which deserved a much larger circulation than it received. This trifling piece, however, has received in the Left Book Club a much larger circulation than it deserves. It is difficult to see how it can have been made a "choice" on its merits. But it is easy to see that it swells the anti-Soviet chorus in a quarter hitherto frequently cordial to the U.S.S.R., swells a chorus which includes the whole capitalist press, the Tory-Liberal Party combine, the B.B.C. and every other agency of Imperialist propaganda devoted to *preparation for the next war*. If this were to represent anything more than a temporary aberration, it would be the end of the Left Book Club as it was originally planned and built. For it was built as a means of Education and not as an additional vehicle for Imperialist war propaganda.

R. PAGE ARNOT.

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11,000

Last month we were able to announce that the circulation of THE LABOUR MONTHLY had passed the 10,000 mark. And once again we have to report that the number was sold out. Our record, therefore, was short-lived, and this month the circulation reaches another peak-point in passing the 11,000 mark. We are sure that the increasing of the journal and the efforts of our readers will soon leave this figure behind also.

At the same time the urgency of the appeal which we stressed in the December number still stands. We have to keep this circulation and to increase it still further. We have to meet rising costs. For these purposes we need donations. On another page we have shown how THE LABOUR MONTHLY is financed and that we rely on these donations to prevent debt accumulating. We urge every reader, therefore, to send a donation NOW to The Manager, THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 43 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.

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